

A  
NEW COLLECTION  
OF  
MORAL TALES,

CHIEFLY WRITTEN BY THE CELEBRATED

MARMONTEL,

AND TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH,

By MR. HERON.

IN THREE VOLUMES,

VOLUME FIRST.

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MORAL ALBES



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following TALES are chiefly written by the celebrated MARMONTEL, who has again tried in his old age a species of writing in which he was extremely successful in his youth. Years seem to have impaired neither the vigour, nor the delicacy of his genius. Seldom has moral wisdom been arrayed in a more charming dress than it here wears. He has skilfully selected the characters, the situations, the incidents in human life which are the most generally interesting, and has combined them into some of the sweetest, happiest forms that fancy ever created; on the realities of life, he by some wonderful art unknown to all but himself, at least if

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

we except the author of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, has conferred a magic power to please : Two or three Tales by other authors have been introduced into these volumes ; which however, can hardly do more than serve as foils to *Marmontel*.

We expect that the good old moralist will furnish with materials for another volume.

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NEW  
**MORAL TALES,**

LATELY PUBLISHED,

BY MR MARMONTELLE.

**ERROR OF A GOOD FATHER.**

**PART FIRST.**

**V**OLTAIRE being one day indisposed, the sensible Vauvenargue, good Cideville, and I, who was at that time a very young man, sat by his bedside. He led the conversation upon Terence, and spoke of that author's delicate simplicity, the purity of his style, the correct, but faint sketches of his pencil. For instance, said he, that character, which, however strange, is actually a copy from nature, of a father punishing himself for his harshness to an only son, might have been rendered extremely interesting if the author had possessed greater energy of genius. We read the first scene

Vol. I.

A

of



of the play to which he alluded. You see here, said Voltaire, how interestingly it begins, and how soon it loses its hold on the heart. Menedemus dwindles immediately into a good, easy man, little above a simpleton.

I know an old Menedemus, in my native province, said Cideville, who, after a good deal of distress, is now one of the happiest of men. Let us hear his story, said Voltaire; and Cideville proceeded thus:

I was initiated in the study and practice of the law, under President Vaneville, a magistrate still more respectable for his integrity than for his extensive knowledge. With him I passed the happiest of my youthful years. He had three sons; one by a first wife, whom he had fondly loved; and two by a second, whom he had married since the death of the former, and of whom he was still fonder. I supposed him happy in his domestic connections; for his countenance wore a constant air of serenity and cheerfulness. By degrees, however, his temper altered. I understood, some time after, that he had sent his eldest son to a distant school, the master of which, the prior of a village in the vicinity of the forest of Lions, was favourably spoken of.

Many



Many months had not passed, when I perceived, that M. de Vaneville was inwardly troubled by some extraordinary subject of uneasiness. He was not of a character to suffer what passed in his breast to be easily discovered. And I regarded him with too high respect, to presume to enquire into what he did not voluntarily communicate. I only redoubled my assiduity to please him. He seemed sensible of my concern, and took it kindly, yet did not open his mind to me. Within a few years, he lost his second wife, and both the sons he had by her. I expressed my sympathy in his affliction; but he only said, and that with a stern air; *Heaven is just*. These words were accompanied with a sigh, and succeeded by a long silence. At last, he gave me notice, that he meant to retire from the world, to a small solitary estate he had, named Flamais, in the neighbourhood of Neufchatel. He bade me farewell with evident pain. I begged his permission to write to him, and to visit him, from time to time.

My friend, answered he, in a gentle and melancholy tone of voice, I shall never forget you. But, you must leave me by myself for a while. When I recover a relish for society, yours will certainly be the first company I shall wish for. Have patience, till you hear from me. He then

embraced me, and added: farewel, Cideville; *never marry a second wife.*

This advice, which seemed to have escaped from him, when he was not upon his guard, had however no respect to his present situation. He had been twice married, but was now a widower. It was more especially since the death of his second wife, that his spirits had sunk into a settled melancholy: this I naturally ascribed therefore, to the solitary situation in which he was left. He set out for his country retreat; for three years I heard nothing from him; and began to suppose, that he might have forgotten me. I had at length an invitation to go to see him. I gladly obeyed the summons. Upon my arrival, I found him seated at table, and beside him, a young and handsome country woman; opposite to them, a young country man, and beside *him*, another man, apparently older, plainly dressed, but retaining still somewhat of the most polished air of the town, in his aspect. My friend himself had also contracted much of a rustic appearance: there was nothing about him to remind me of my old president: instead of the large, flowing wig to which my eyes had been accustomed, his bald front, with only a few white hairs scatter-

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## NEW MORAL TALES.

ed over it, now presented itself. It was all that I could do to recognize him.

Come, said he, my friend, sit down among my family; embrace my son, and his wife. She whom you see in that plain dress, is Mademoiselle de Le-onval, now my daughter-in-law, pupil to that gal-lant man, my neighbour, M. de Nelcour, to whom I am indebted for all the happiness of my old days. You have imagined this young couple, I presume, to be my gardener and his wife? And you are not mistaken; that is their condition; and mine like-wise. We work all together in gardens which you shall, by and by, see.

We had a good, but plain dinner, in the Pytha-gorean stile, consisting chiefly of pulse and other vegetables, with very little animal food, but some baskets of excellent fruits.

Excellent, to be sure, said Voltaire; but proceed to the gardens. I am impatient to hear what the old man had to tell you. Nay, said Vauvenargue, with your leave, let us see the worthy father with his children a few moments longer at table. One is so much at home, in the company of such wor-thy and happy people!—The happiness of each of

## NEW MORAL TALES.

the three, said Cideville, was expressed in a peculiar manner. The father had the aspect of a man whose heart had been long oppressed with grief, and was now expanded with joy. The son seemed to be proud that he had at last made his father happy: The young woman, with an air of modesty and sensibility, seemed to be inwardly delighted that she could contribute to the happiness of both,—and to enjoy their mutual affection to one another, no less than their love for her.

After dinner, we walked into the gardens. These had been formed under the eye, and with the hand of a master. Nature was here all luxuriance; plenty was distributed on every hand, in a wild but pleasing confusion. The vine entwined the branches of the plumb-tree: a quincunx of cherry-trees shaded beds of strawberry bushes: fertile rows of fruit-trees were planted round those plats in which lettuces or melons grew in rich exuberance. All this, said Voltaire, might have a good effect in harmonious verse. But, my friend, the art of telling a story agreeably in prose, consists in giving easy, slight descriptions, and passing in a graceful, lively manner from scene to scene.



Well! well! said Cideville; the rest of the party no sooner perceived, that M. de Vaneville wished to be alone with me, than they left us to ourselves. We sat down together, under an arbour of honeysuckle. The good man then took me by the hand. You see, said he, how my present life passes. It is busy, yet calm and pleasant. Labour, appetite, sleep, peace of mind, the interest insensibly inspired by the scenes of nature, varying with the changing seasons of the year, my pains rewarded, my hopes almost every year fulfilled, and, above all the satisfaction of witnessing the mutual love and happiness of my children;—These are enjoyments which heaven has reserved to bless your friend in his old age. It is not the evening of a fine day; but one of the finest evenings, after a day of—gloomy blackness and storms.

You saw me when my heart was wrung with sorrow. I concealed the cause, but, I may now, dear Cideville, deposite in your bosom, a secret I have so long confined to my own.

After the loss of an amiable and affectionate wife, by whom I had only one son, who was still an infant; I felt a painful void in my heart, and was distressed amid the loneliness and solitude of my house.

Hitherto



Hitherto the domestic felicity which I had enjoyed in the evenings, had cheered me after the labours of the day, and compensated for its fatigues. But now I had only a scene of mourning, solitude, and silence to return to. I could not bear it, and began to despair of ever becoming able to accustom myself to it, when I happened to hear a young lady mentioned, who was of a respectable family, and of an age at which the understanding, manners, and character are generally considered to be fully formed. She was spoken of, as a model of good sense, goodness of heart, discretion, and modesty. I sought her acquaintance, and saw, or at least thought, I saw, that she had not been praised above her merits. I obtained her in marriage. Till she became a mother, her conduct fully answered my wishes and hopes: or rather, to myself, she was uniformly the same to the time of her death: and it was without my knowledge, and in respect only to my son by my former wife, that her character altered; her excessive maternal affection to her own children, rendering her incapable of due sentiments of kindness to the son of another woman.

For some short time after our marriage, she had shewn almost as much fondness for my son, as if he had been her own. And when this gave place to

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aversion, she concealed that so artfully, that I never once perceived it. Closely occupied as I was, in the functions of my office, you know whether I could have leisure to attend to my children's education. This care I was obliged to leave to my wife; those to whom she committed it, were dependent more immediately upon her, than on me: so that, even by consulting them, I could learn nothing but what she chose, that they should let me know, or make me believe.

Her greatest secret uneasiness, which dwelt deep upon her heart, was to think that my child by my first wife, had an equal title with her sons to share my fortune, she looked upon him as a stranger who came in, to plunder them of their property. You will naturally conceive how much these sentiments of his mother-in-law and governess must have contributed to embitter my boy's earlier years. At that age, the human heart has a very quick sense of natural justice: And my son soon became sensible that he was unjustly dealt with.

I have remarked, says Voltaire, that a child, when he thinks himself justly punished, submits without murmuring. His own heart condemns him. If he rebels, it is because he has been undeservedly punished.

nished. There is then, said Vauvenargue, in his mild voice, a primary law, engraven on the human heart—and who engraved it?—The same, Being, answered Voltaire, who appointed the laws by which my clock performs its movements; the same Workman, who hung the great Machine of which the spring and balance were discovered by Newton. But, let us proceed; for your old man is really interesting; and he is now waiting for us.

I observed, continued M. de Vaneville, a change in my son's character. Sadness, diffidence, and a gloomy timidity were expressed in his countenance. The cares of business naturally producing a degree of seriousness and perhaps severity in the expression of my features, my son grew fearful of me: That air of fondness, that kind and tender reception which had formerly attracted him to approach me with eagerness, no longer appeared, to assure him of the kindness and indulgence of his father. Under the idea of respect, they inspired him with a degree of terror for me, which repressed his complaints. Thus kept at an invidious distance, chastised with harshness, whether in fault or not, jealous of the preference continually shewn to his two brothers, and secretly comparing, in his little festering heart, the kindness shewn to them, with the

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rigorous treatment used towards himself, he became every day more sad and fullen. My cruel reprimands compleated his distress. He believed himself an object of aversion to me—the hatred of his father!—Nature thus lost its last hope, and its last consolation. He sunk into a stupid despondency, which was taken for an obstinate unwillingness to apply to any thing useful.

I sometimes tried to reason with him; but coldly and harshly, and without any thing of persuasive gentleness. He heard me, with his eyes fixed, and swimming in tears, which I, unhappy parent that I was; might sometimes have kissed away!—But, his silence, which was owing to despair, I attributed to a fulleness of soul and character. Alas! it was I that was fullen and harsh to him. I at last drove him from me; and he then became absolutely wild and untractable; Poor child! What sufferings had he not to bear in silence!

His nurse was his only resource; when she came to see him, he would throw himself in her arms, and bathe her bosom with his tears. Oh! my good, my only mother! would he say, sobbing, I have none in the world that loves me, but you, None but you pities me. But, why did you suckle me?

Why



Why, my Real mother,—my mother whom, alas! I have lost,—why did she give me life? Why did neither of you strangle me in my cradle? Poor orphan! yes, I am so; I have neither father nor mother. A cruel step-mother has hardened and shut *her* heart against a son who is not hers! His nurse melted into tears, embraced him, said every thing that her tenderness could suggest to console him; but, all in vain; and, as the last aggravation of his distress, and of her cruelty, my wife happening to over-hear the scenes of sorrow which passed between my son and his nurse Juliana, and suspecting perhaps that this good woman might speak to me on the subject, forbade her to come back.

My son came to know of this. He was now twelve years of age; and had acquired some degree of energy in his character. He broke out, for the first time, in reproaches against his mother-in-law, —told her that, out of respect for me, he had hitherto borne all her ill usage patiently; but that to envy him his last and sole consolation, to deprive him of the liberty of seeing his nurse, in order that not even the shadow of a mother might remain to him, was a piece of barbarity which none but an inhuman step-mother could be guilty of!—and that, as to him she was absolutely a Fury, he was determined

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mined to flee from her. Prevail with my father whose heart you have hardened against me, to drive me out of his house. It is the last favour his child requests.

You will readily suppose, that these complaints would be represented to me in the very worst light they could bear. *An inhuman step-mother, a Fury, a hard-hearted father*; strong language this, at his years! It must be distressing to you, and I feel it to be extremely so, myself, to see such a character declare itself so decisively in a child! But, perhaps nature is not so inflexible, at so tender an age. I have heard mention made of a good man in a priory in the neighbourhood of the forest of Lyons, who boards children, and brings them up with the greatest care. He excels particularly in subduing obstinacy, and bending the most stubborn spirits to docility and mildness. She mentioned farther several instances in which he had succeeded, and perceiving me to be much distressed; what say you, then? continued she; this is perhaps an evil from which good may come. Your son seems to possess great vigour of mind: But his violent temper must be subdued; otherwise, there is no degree of extravagance to which it may not in time transport him.

VOL. I.

B

What

What could I advance in opposition to such advice? especially as I was persuaded, that my son's impetuosity proceeded from a naturally bad temper. I agreed to what seemed to be the boy's own desire. The place mentioned was a solitary village in the depth of a forest; none could be more eligible.

On the day of his departure, when he came to take leave of me, he approached with a serious sedate air which would have surprized me, even in a man. Go, my son, said I, learn to get the better of your froward temper; after some time, I hope to see you return more moderate and docile. Embrace me; Farewel. At this moment, his little heart was like to burst. Instead of coming to my arms, the poor fellow kneeled before me, and gave me *his* hand——Ah! my friend, methinks, I still feel the glowing impression of his lips upon *mine*. Thou art not then absolutely insensible! said I, seeing him heave the most violent sobs. I insensible! ah! my father! said he, in a piercing voice.—Well, then, returned I, if thou hast any native goodness in thee; if thou hast any affection for thy father, promise to correct thy temper. Correct? returned he in a voice interrupted by tears and sobs. What is your child's crime? That he has no longer a mother! That he has——Here he

he stopped, and turning his eyes upon me with a look that pierced me to the very heart: O my father, said he, in the name of her who is no more, bless your child: he is going from you. He was prostrate at my feet; and while I gave him my blessing, he wept over them.

I was softened, no less than he: nature speaking in his looks and in my heart, had nearly reconciled us. I was opening my arms to receive him. My lips were ready to pronounce his pardon. Alas! What distress would not one other word have spared me!

But that very moment his mother-in-law with her two children came in. Rise, my son, said I, kiss your mother's hand, and ask her blessing. At these words, his tears ceased, his whole soul seemed to be shocked, and a look of indignation was all the farewell he gave my wife. I bade him embrace his brothers; but he turned sternly from them—returned, and kneeled again before me. Forgive me, father, said he, I love, I revere you; but compel me not to kiss the hand that oppresses me: command me not to embrace——Rise, unnatural child, said I, I know you not; and as he retired, with all

the wildness of despair in his countenance; Let him be gone, cried I, and never again appear before me.

The froward, passionate cast which I had observed in his temper, and my persuasion that his aversion for his mother-in-law was unreasonable, with my hope, that distance, age, the cares and lessons of a master, who was truly a good man, might correct what was amiss in his natural temper—these considerations, I say, soothed my mind under the painful impressions which the tenderness he shewed at bidding me farewell, had at first made upon it; and in his absence I saw nothing but the prospect of good for both him and me.

But, the unfortunate prepossession which had injured him with his father, continued to pursue him in the house of his teacher. That good man was a compound of rusticity and pedantry. You will easily suppose, then, that he could not be a fit person to correct a character which had been represented to him, as invincibly stubborn, and which he was directed to break, if he could not bend it. Severity of discipline, a harsh address, strict confinement, frequent threats, and corporal chastisement;—in short, the most disgusting and imperious tyranny, the most rigid slavery, formed the system of education



cation to which my child was now subjected. He could not bear it; but conceived a mortal aversion for all the tasks which his stern master prescribed.

But, what gave him the most pain, was to hear, whenever he complained of the disagreeable circumstances in his situation, that, such was the pleasure of a justly irritated parent. Justly irritated! cried he, weeping bitterly. Ah! did he but know! Ah! did he but know the heart of his child! Perish the wretches who have irritated the heart of a good father against his child! Perish the serpent who daily distills its poison against him! When his master blamed him for his dislike to study; it is not study, he would say, but life that I dislike; and I know not why I should not instantly free myself from the load.

Severe as his master was, he sometimes found it necessary to calm his own passions, in order to soothe the boy. My son thus enjoyed occasional intervals of relaxation. But, at such times, he would always retire to solitude; and when he was found by himself, absorbed in melancholy, and was asked the cause: I am sick, was his answer.—Where are you affected? Here, would he reply, striking on his breast.



Had I known then, what I now know, I should have become sensible of my injustice to him; and should have gone, in spite of my wife, to embrace and console my unhappy child. But one carefs from me, one, however slight, mark of my affection would have changed his character; his heart would have been softened, and he would have melted into tenderness in my arms. But, it was never to me that his master wrote: I never saw any part of his letters but what was calculated to embitter my spirit against my boy. But, the most atrocious act of cruelty which I can hardly pardon even to the ashes of her who was once dear to me, was the keeping back of my son's letters, which he wrote to me, in the bitterness of his distress.

It was the despair to which my silence reduced him, that made him take his final resolution. He eloped. The forest favoured his escape; and in a single night he was entirely out of the reach of people who could not very readily pursue him.

When I received the news of his elopement, or possibly his death, I felt all the distress which it was natural for so unfortunate an accident to produce in the breast of a father. But my wife had the address to divert my concern by pretending to view it  
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only as a youthful folly, and assuring me that within a few days, my son would either be brought back, or would return of himself. In the mean time, we agreed to make no noise of the matter. But, I spared no pains to recover him. What misled me, was the supposition that my son might have gone on board some merchant ship, as the children of the common people often do when they elope from their parents. I wrote to the different seaport towns, and described, without naming him. But, all my enquiries, however careful, proved vain: and after six months of unsuccessful search, and idle hope, I concluded, that my son was no more.

No means were neglected, that could be thought of to divert my sorrow, and fix my whole tenderness upon my two remaining children. But, as if nature had determined to revenge herself for the cruelties of a step-mother, those two children were taken from us, on a sudden, as if strangled by some unseen arm; that infectious distemper which is commonly so fatal to the first stages of life, cut them both off together. Their mother, inconsolable for her loss, soon followed them to the grave.

My

My distress was now at its greatest height. But, not believing myself guilty, I should have borne with fortitude all the rigour of my destiny ; had not Heaven, whose justice leaves no crimes unpunished, led me to discover in the bottom of a drawer, the torn pieces of the letters which my poor son had written to me in his exile, but which had been kept up by my wife. Ah ! my friend, it was at this season, that oppressive weight of sorrow under which you saw me overpowered, first settled on my heart.

In what affecting language those letters were written ! I recollect the last of them ; and you shall hear it. “ What ! father ! said he, not one word to comfort your unhappy child ! Ten suppliant and tender letters, ten letters wet with the tears of an innocent child, who only begs that you would not hate him, have failed of obtaining me this last favour ! O my father ! write to me : would you but say : *My son I hate you not* ; this were enough, these dear words written by your hand should be kissed a thousand times a-day, should be imprinted on my lips, and engraven on my heart. For you, this heart is full of tenderness and respect : it is not of you that it complains ; cease then to rend and torment it. Till now it has had fortitude to bear all :  
but

but the silence, neglect, forgetfulness, or hatred of a father is more than it can endure; it must be crushed under the cruel load."

Conceive, if you can, continued M. de Vaneville, my extreme distress and indignation. Thus to intercept my son's letters, and to make *him* believe that I had forsaken him,—*me* that he braved my anger! Nothing could be more criminal; but it was only to you, the guilty and unhappy secret was revealed.

Behold, said Voltaire, how, the sweetest and tenderest sentiment of nature, a mother's love for her children, may become guilty and fatal even to herself, when suffered to rise to any pitch of extravagance! Alas! said Vauvenargue, all our passions are the progeny of self-love; the more unjust and cruel they are, so much the more do they resemble their parent.

My old friend, resumed Cideville, proceeded next to tell me, how that being now more lonely than ever in his domestic situation, he was haunted by tormenting reflections. I now recollected a thousand instances of the hatred which that unjust woman had conceived for my boy, and which I ought

to



to have discerned through all the disguises by which she strove to conceal it. Sometimes I accused nature, that she had not spoken to my heart, in behalf of my own blood. I was enraged at myself, to think, that I could be capable of such blindness and weakness. Sometimes I cursed myself for refusing to listen to nature's voice. My house became a place of horror to me; when I went abroad into the world, methought the eyes of all seemed to ask me for my son; and I could not bear it. You were then acquainted with my resolution to retire and hide myself in solitude.

I was just setting out, when to complete my misery, Juliana, the nurse of my unfortunate son, having learnt that I had lost him, came to see me, all in tears, and while her heart was full, revealed to me what had passed in their secret conversations. Never father suffered what I felt, at hearing her story. I saw all the mortification and distress he had suffered, without daring once to complain to me. I saw, that while his heart was so cruelly torn, his love and respect for me were unalterable.—I saw, that I had been a bad father to the best of sons. And, perhaps he is now no more, said I, throwing myself down, and I am the cause of his death, and my crime is irreparable.

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The poor woman, mingling her tears with mine, strove to console me. No, sir, said she, he still lives, unless they have had the cruelty to attempt his life—and God keep me from thinking this possible!—or some accident have shortened his days. Twenty times has he said to me, in the utmost height of his distress, that if his life were his own, he should know at once what to do: but then the amiable child, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, would fervently exclaim: No, it is thine, O my God! thou gavest me this life of bitterness and sorrow; and thou alone hast a right to take it away; but thou beholdest what I endure: only, compensate my sufferings by restoring to me, one day or another, my father's affections; in his arms, I shall forget all that I have suffered.

My hopes now revived: but then I thought of what he was still suffering; and all consolation vanished from my heart. I should have thought it a crime in me to indulge the faintest emotion of joy. The plainness and simplicity of a rural life had too many pleasures in it. I could not forgive myself even those moments of amusement which the cultivation of my gardens afforded. This labour, said I, is voluntary and pleasing: that to which my son's misfortunes have condemned him, is hard and un-

remitting

remitting : I divert myself with adorning a piece of fertile ground : while he perhaps struggles in the sweat of his brow against a barren and unkindly soil : at my table plain and wholesome food is served up in great plenty ; but I know not if he is not often put off with a scanty pittance of black bread, wet with his tears ? Perhaps he may be in a ship at the mercy of the billows, tossed to and fro by tempests, worn out by the toils of the day, and disturbed at night by blustering winds and driving rains ? while I sleep sound, and at my ease—Oh ! no, it never was sound,—the sleep in which I was constantly haunted by my son's image. At table, I thought I saw him pale and languishing before me ; and all the food that I tasted had a mixture of bitterness. At last, shall I say it ? when I was alone, and fancy thus brought the image of my child before me, tears flowed from my eyes, I stretched out my arms to my son and intreated his pardon.

In this manner, my friend, did I spend three years in my retirement, a companion in the labours of those good peasants to whom providence has granted a native cheerfulness of temper, to make some compensation for the hardships of their way of life, but who could not help taking part in my affliction. I can give you but a faint idea of this  
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long season of mourning to a father's soul ; this long night of dark distress.

Still however, I knew not what was become of my son ? or how I might recover him ? this I shall leave him to give you an account of, himself, when you and he are alone together. The young couple and their friend now came up with us. We walked towards a spot, where we had a fine prospect of the agriculture of the surrounding country, and saw the sun setting in majestic beauty.

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## ERROR OF A GOOD FATHER.

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### PART SECOND.

NEXT day, the young man and I walked out together, and he took up the story of his elopement where his father had broken off.

Sir, If my father has related to you the story of my childhood, you know my wrongs. My temper was naturally violent : and my sensibility was put to the most painful trials. I could not moderate it ;



and hence arose our misfortunes. My mother was dead; and my father was all to me. I loved him in my heart, and was jealous of his affection. My jealousy rendered me gloomy, peevish, and intractable. My father despaired of softening my character, and sent me from him. In my exile, where I should have been tenderly dealt with, I was treated harshly: I fancied that I could not possibly be more unhappy than I then was, and accordingly eloped. I had prevailed with a shepherd boy of my own age to exchange clothes with me; and in this disguise, I made off. I travelled by night, avoided the villages, and proceeded through by-paths till I might reach some distant farm where a shepherd was wanted. I at last found what I wished in a hamlet near Fleury and Aumale.

In this free, easy condition, where I had plenty of bread and milk, slept upon fresh straw, and awaked by day-break to lead out my flock to the pasture; I might have been happy enough, had it not been for a mixed recollection of the distress I had suffered, and the displeasure of my father, whom I represented to myself as irritated, denouncing threats, steeling his heart against me, and preparing to punish my elopement with unrelenting severity, if I should be discovered.

After

After some months, my uneasiness ceased, and I had the mortifying satisfaction to find that I was either neglected or forgotten. My affliction then became more calm, but at the same time sunk deeper upon my heart. The stillness of the country, and the wide solitude through which I daily roved, contributed to thicken and settle the gloom which hung over my mind. Especially, when I thought of the distance which separated me from my father, I would say to myself, *I shall see him no more*; and then my heart became absolutely despondent. My weak head could not have stood these reiterated shocks, had I not fortunately reserved to myself one agreeable mean of amusement. It was not study, but the irksome circumstances attending it that I had disliked; when I eloped therefore I could not part with my dear book: Virgil still accompanied me. The Eclogues gave me the society of Tityrus and Melibœus, and I called myself Alexis. The Georgics gave my new situation a degree of dignity in my eyes: I saw my admired poet ennoble the country life; and I read him with pride.

As I was one day engaged in this interesting reading, under the shade of an old willow-tree, I happened to fall asleep. During my slumbers, this M. de Nelcour, who had retired from the world,

and had good reason for somewhat of a misanthropic aversion for society which he had conceived, happened to pass by. He was struck at the sight of a book open in the hand of a young shepherd. It was a singularity that surprised him. He stooped to observe what the book might be, and saw, that it was Virgil. He would not disturb me, but, continuing his walk, kept within sight of the willow-tree, and when he saw me awake, came up to me.

Young man, said he, I have seen beside you, something very strange, a book open, and that book Virgil. Is it Virgil, you are reading? If your education has been such as to enable you to read Virgil, by what misfortune, pray, have you been reduced to this condition?

It is nowise impossible, answered I, that an orphan who has received a good education, should be reduced to distress. This is my case. He asked whence I came, and what was my name and family. I am called Alexis, said I; I belong to this hamlet; It is unnecessary for me to tell you more. He discovered surprise at my obstinate concealment of my secret; and I no less, that an accidental passenger should have any curiosity to know more concerning

me

me. The spirit of my reply impressed him with esteem for me.

I am well pleased, said he, to see you so prudent, although so young. Ah! that I had, in due time, been equally cautious of trusting strangers! But my curiosity, said he, is so natural and so just, that you ought at least to suppose it innocent. Your youth and your misfortune inspire a degree of interest, which is surely sufficient to justify me.

I begged his excuse for my indiscreet answer to a question prompted by his benevolence. But, Sir, said I, why should I revive in my mind, the memory of what I once was, but am now no more? It can only serve to renew and increase my uneasiness. I have no desire to be known in any other character than that of a shepherd, as I am. Neither in your eyes nor my own, need I be ashamed of being so. Virgil tells us, that the gods were shepherds: but every body in the world knows not, how much the pastoral life has been and still ought to be honoured. I shall venture then, although I know not who you are, to intreat you not to betray me. I am a poor destitute child. But, I earn my livelihood by making myself useful; and if you take any indiscreet advantage of the secret you have surprised



from me, while I was asleep, you will disturb the innocent life which I lead. In the name of whatever is dearest to you in the world, continued I, promise me, that you will keep it.

I promise, said he;—on condition, that you allow me to come hither, and spend some hours, beside you and your flock, every day. I am acquainted with misfortune, as well as you, my dear child; and like you have a turn for study, and am fond of Virgil. We shall read him together; and when we are better known to one another, mutual confidence will improve our conversation.

What! cried Voltaire, did he not carry him with him? Have patience, said Vauvenargue; he did not know him; and, for any thing he knew, Alexis might, as yet, be only a little idle run away. What although he were? said Voltaire. He read Virgil, was proud of the character of a shepherd, and could bear misfortune.

This worthy man, returned Alexis (for such was his present name) came every day to see me, while I fed my flock. We spent together a part of some of the finest days in autumn: And those days flowed sweetly on. Virgil, Horace, with whom he made

me

me acquainted, and whom I began to relish as well as he; with several French books which he brought out, and made me read, Montaigne, La Fontaine, Racine, and Fenelon, agreeably employed our leisure.

But, at intervals, when our reading was interrupted, M. de Nelcour from time to time endeavoured to draw from me the secret of my misfortune. Is it possible, said he, one day, that a child like you can find no one in his family, or even in the whole world, to pity him? I have asked no person's pity, answered I. Young as I am, I know that in the world, the unfortunate are thought troublesome.

Ah! and it is but too true! said he, (for I had unconsciously touched upon the wound that festered in his heart) and he now related to me, that he had been in his youth, what is called an amiable man, and had ruined himself by his liberality. Of an hundred good friends who had attended his suppers and other entertainments, not one had offered him the least assistance in the decline of his fortune. The woman who had admired him as a model of gallantry and agreeable manners, no sooner heard of the fall of his fortune than they found him changed to an object of horror. He then determined upon

upon an immediate retrenchment of his expences, fold his property, paid his debts, and retired to a small farm in the neighbourhood, the only part of his estate that remained to him.

I heard him with eager interest, while he gave me an account of his follies, his vain credulity, his illusions, his errors, yet still his confidence did not command mine in return. So finding that I still eluded all his attempts to draw my secret from me, he wisely resolved to pry into it no farther, but leave it to come of itself. Dear Alexis, said he, one day to me, winter, you know, is coming on, and we shall see one another, no more. Do you know, that the thought of this makes me uneasy? It makes me uneasy too, replied I, sighing. Why then, returned he, should we give uneasiness to one another? Why need we separate? I live a quiet, solitary life in the village of Fleury, near your farm. I have still preserved enough out of the wreck of my fortune, wherewith to make my old age happy. Come you, and be happy with me. My most pleasing care is the education of a young girl who is an orphan. If you will accept the same asylum, I shall have two children instead of one.

Sir,

Sir, said I, your favours are conferred with a degree of frankness, which makes it my duty to open my mind to you. My predominant passion is the love of liberty: and I consider no man as free, save him, who depends only on nature and himself, and by his labour, forces his nourishment from the earth. I would be that man. I would be Virgil's husbandman or gardener.

With me, said he, you shall be both. You shall have a good farm to manage, and an excellent garden to cultivate. This is what I propose. In the management of the farm, I am still but a novice; we shall study the art of husbandry together. In gardening I believe I can give you some lessons. Such a prospect determined me at once; I took leave of my master and followed M. de Nelcour.

He had a garden which I found in wonderfully good order; and a lovely girl, named Natalia, nine years of age. In this lovely child, said he, you see the comfort of my solitary life. She is not my own daughter; but the mutual attachment between her and me is become so habitual, that it has acquired the force of natural affection, and the ties of adoption have connected us with the same strength, as if they were the bonds of consanguinity. I married  
her



her mother, the widow of M. de Leonval, a captain of granadiers, who was killed at the assault of Denaim, and thus adopted his daughter whom he had left without fortune, and was proud to acquit my country in this manner of the debt she owed that brave man. Natalia's character had already begun to open in the most favourable manner; she was little less dear to me than to her mother, and by her little endearments rendered our union still more and more affectionate, and more and more happy. But, our happiness was of short duration; and Natalia and I had soon to lament the death, she of a good mother, and I of an excellent wife. My friend, said she on her death-bed, I bequeath my daughter to your care, and she is all that I have to bequeath. Be to her both father and mother. I promised that I would; and I have kept my word. But, as I have now no fortune to leave my dear child; I bring her up in a taste for the manners, enjoyments, and pleasures of the country. This farm and house shall be her dowry.

I know not what M. de Nelcour might have in his mind when he spoke thus to me. But, for my own part, I from that time began to indulge some distant hope of becoming, one day, the husband of Natalia; and began even then to feel that tender regard

regard for her, which, as she and I grew up, gradually ripened into love.

I was now dear to M. de Nelcour; and in our labour, reading, walking, and attention to the education of Natalia, the most precious of all our plants, we were constant associates. Our days were busy, and our nights tranquil. Months and seasons thus stole away, at Fleury, with the quickness of thought. And M. de Nelcour frequently repeated, that he had left nothing in the world, that could now deserve from him one reflection of regret. But, I had left a father: and his image would often seem to rise up before me, and reproach me for making myself at a distance from him.

The lovely, engaging Natalia, with a charming docility repaid all our pains in her education. The life of activity which she led, after our example, contributed much to improve her figure, as she grew up. She was slender and agile like the pliant shoots which she had planted; her complexion was fresh as the fruits, and bright as the flowers which grew under her hands: and while she wrought in the garden, with sometimes the pruning hook in her hand, sometimes a hurdle upon her head, or a basket

basket under her arm, she appeared more charming than the goddesses whose gifts she was gathering.

Farewel study, said Voltaire; the garden is now to engross every thought. Oh! no, replied Cideville; study had still its turn; and in its pursuits, the ingenuous dispositions, the understanding, and the heart of Natalia, the whole of her character, and sometimes, sentiments of tenderness with which she now began to be animated, appeared to the fullest advantage.

Natalia, as well as I, said Alexis, became sensible of the progress which mutual friendship was making in the hearts of both. But we were both far from suffering any uneasiness from it. Pleased to be together, and interested in one another, she, with her gentle gaiety, and I with my melancholy, we breathed love like air, and were happy in meeting each other's eyes, as in viewing the light of day. A happy security saved us from all danger. But, the time came when M. de Nelcour, who saw farther than we, and was a little more anxious, would no longer trust to our innocence; and when Natalia was sixteen years of age, he determined to know from myself whether I was willing to unite my fate with her's; and if I should refuse, to send me from her.

Alexis,

Alexis, said he, have not I waited with great patience for your full confidence? surely you owe so much to my friendship; yet, still you refuse it; I complain not. But, at the age you have now attained, I may no longer keep you about me, unless you connect yourself with us by the most sacred ties; it remains with yourself to say, whether you have any right to pretend to what I allude to.

Yes, Sir, I should have a right; my birth entitles me to so much; but my misfortunes forbid; I am in disgrace with a father, who, alas! has been cruelly imposed upon, and is no less to be pitied than I; for he is beset with persons who are enemies to his blood, and by their malice abuse his goodness. He is just, but weak, and alas! it is his secret, not my own, I have thought it my duty to conceal from you. I have avoided naming him, that I might not seem to accuse him, and that I might not reduce you to the cruel alternate of either giving me up to his resentment, or of detaining me from him. Blame not then a silence which has been extremely painful to myself. You shall know who I am, if ever heaven restore me the indulgence and affection of a father. Then, if it be not then too late, shall Alexis lay at the feet of Natalia, of your lovely child, the fortune which his birth once taught



him to hope. Till that time must I leave you, with a heart filled with sorrow, gratitude, and love. You will not forget me, Sir; still deign to love me, for you shall ever be dear to my heart.

My friend, said he, I am happy to know, that your reserve has been owing to so honourable a principle. Yes, doubtless, they are unworthy children who clamorously complain of any wrongs they suffer from their parents. But, I should do you a cruel injury, if I allowed you to leave me, without securing you a place; I have one to offer you. Not far from this, in the village of Flamais, near Neufchatel, is a respectable man who has for some time, lived there, in retirement, and who, I am told, employs his time much in the same way as I. He at present wants a good gardener. I am, I believe, so far known to him, that he will accept you upon my recommendation. He is President Vaneville.

Judge what I felt upon hearing this name: struck, and confounded as I was, I was ready to fall down breathless. I felt my voice die away on my lips. He perceived me pale, speechless, and incapable of motion, and attributed this appearance of sudden illness to my love to Natalia, and the pain my heart felt at the thought of parting from her. Come, my friend,

friend, said he, have courage. To part, must no doubt, be painful to us all; but our situation renders it unavoidably necessary.

I made no answer: my thoughts were other than what he supposed. I felt the most earnest desire to see my father again. But, I supposed, at the same time, that I should find my mortal enemy, and her two children with him. In what manner, would I be received?

The gentleman to whom I propose to offer your services, is probity itself, said M. de Nelcour. He has an air of austerity; but all the world allow him the greatest goodness of nature. He is melancholy; but his melancholy renders his character the more interesting, for he has experienced no small share of affliction. He has lost his wife and two children, the sole hopes of their marriage. He lives alone at Flamais, and gives himself to the indulgence of grief. It will, I hope, be matter of comfort to him, to have with him, a young man so good and estimable as you.

These news produced a sudden change in my sentiments. But, instead of the joy which it was natural for me to feel, I was affected with a sort of

religious horror; for a train of such misfortunes succeeding each other so rapidly, had the appearance of a punishment inflicted by the immediate hand of heaven. From that moment you may suppose my resolution to have been taken. Yes, Sir, said I, write to him, make an offer of my services to that virtuous recluse; but mention nothing of what you know concerning me.

He wrote, and praised my manners, character, and skill in the art of gardening, and without saying any thing of my early education, promised that he would answer for me. I was accordingly accepted, and set out; but my impatience to see my father again, did not render me insensible to the pain of parting with my dear Natalia. Farewel, Natalia, said I. Although I leave you, I cannot forego the hope of dedicating myself, one day, solely to your service. May the young trees which we have planted and cultivated together, remind you sometimes of Alexis! While you gather these apples, and these peaches, beautiful like yourself, would you only now and then breathe a wish, that Alexis were gathering them with you!

The lovely girl shed some tears, and in a tone of voice which sensibly affected me, said, Farewel,  
Alexis,

Alexis, I would be sorry indeed, were I never to see you again. Remember Natalia.

I took the way to Flamais; and my heart was tumultuously agitated with joy, hope, and anxious fear. I was going to see my father again, but to see him while he still lamented a wife whom I had offended, and two sons whom I had treated with scorn. Had I been more docile and submissive, I might still have remained to him; had I but repressed my resentment, and borne, with patience, the harshness of a step-mother, he might have had in me a son to wipe away his tears. But, unfortunate wretch that I was! after my disobedience, elopement, and wicked desertion of him, how should I appear before him? Might I but have time, before he could discover who I was, to make amends for the errors of my past conduct, to soothe his resentment, and to revive in his heart the sentiments of paternal tenderness? Seven years of absence from him, spent in hard labour, during which all my features were altered, and my hair and complexion had become darker, my simpleness and rustic air might, I thought, have changed me so far that any other would hardly know me; but, a father's eyes might be more discerning. Well, then, said I to myself, if nature speak within him and betray me, I shall seize the



moment, and throw myself at his feet; and implore not his indulgence but his pity. But, in this case, I would receive my pardon as a criminal spared by his judge's compassion. And who could know, if he would not look upon M. de Nelcour as an accomplice with his son, who had inhumanly concealed him from a father's pursuit? Ah! if this idea should strike him, I might no longer hope to conciliate his favour, or good will to our lovely Natalia. These reflections occupied my mind, while I was on my way from Fleury to Flamais; and I arrived there, all trembling for fear, lest I should be known by my father.

Alas! whether his eyes had been so weakened by long continued weeping that he could not discriminate my features, or I was really so much changed that I no longer appeared the same person,—he had not the smallest suspicion, that it was his son who was sent back to him. But, what a sudden and deep impression did I feel, at sight of him! Sorrow, rather than age, had wrinkled his brow. The tears I had cost him, seemed to have furrowed his cheeks. Affliction had bowed him towards the grave.

O God

O God of nature! thou knowest how nearly emotions of affection and sorrow had overpowered me, and made me cast myself at his feet. But, I suddenly felt myself intimidated and restrained by remorse, and by that air of sadness and severity which the wound that festered in his heart had communicated to his countenance. I, with a tremour, which would naturally seem the effect of rustic bashfulness, assured him of my respectful obedience, and my disposition to serve him with cheerfulness and fidelity. He bade me follow him, led me into his garden, assigned me my tasks, and then carried me to the little dwelling which I was to occupy, and till I should have established myself in it, kindly provided for all my wants. To-morrow, said he, as he left me, I shall be at work myself, by the dawn of day.

I slept very little that night, as you may well think. But, I felt inexpressible comfort in finding myself near my father, unknown to him, and placed in the most favourable situation I could desire, in order to merit his kindness, and to shew him, how greatly I was changed. Nothing easier than to shew him invariable sweetness of temper, the most perfect docility, and respectful obedience. It would be more my pleasure, than my duty, to prevent all

his

his wishes; and in his gardener he should find a degree of sanctified respect and filial piety which might lead him to recognize and to pardon his unhappy son. But, that I might dissemble and restrain the emotions of nature within me, courage was requisite; and this virtue I flattered myself, that I should be able to exert.

Next morning, I was in the garden by day-break, and found my dear master there before me. He and I continued to work in silence, which was only now and then interrupted by a few words, after long pauses. He asked whence I came. From Anet, answered I: and this was the only lie I made to him. Does your father still live?—Yes, thank heaven.—And your mother?—She is no more. Here he uttered a deep sigh.—And how is your father employed?—He works in the gardens.—Is he still young?—He is advancing in years.—Has he any children beside you?—No, he has none but me.—And have you left him?—It was his own pleasure that I should.—Is he at his ease then so that he can live without you?—Yes; but if I merit my masters favour, I hope that he will bring us together near himself. Alexis, said he, behave to me as you did to M. de Nelcour, be prudent, industrious and honest, and I promise you that you shall in a short time

time see your father here. I should be sorry to divide you from him. As he spoke these words he turned from me, and I saw him wipe his eyes.

I have since reminded him of that first conversation. Ah! said he, thou couldst not see what impression each word thou spakest, made upon my heart. It was then more than a year since I had pronounced the names of father and son; I had not strength to pronounce them; there was a weight on my heart; and with thee it gave me some consolation to pronounce and hear them.

Pleased to see me every day double my activity and diligence, form for him a new garden, and modestly instruct him in a branch of the culture of the ground in which he was unskilled, my father had sometimes the goodness to moderate my ardour in my work; and an involuntary inclination held him almost constantly with me. What age are you, Alexis, asked he one day.—Twenty-one.—Twenty-one! He sighed and remained long silent.

Ah! said Vauvenargue to Voltaire, he reminds me of Egistus; Egistus is of the same age.

He walked round the garden, replied Alexis, to soothe his uneasiness, then returned to me and said;



said; don't you think of marrying Alexis? yes, sir, I have thought of it, said I; and if such is your good pleasure, and my father's will, I believe I have found a young woman at Fleury who would make me happy. What age is she of? She is sixteen.—Does she belong to honest creditable parents?—She is daughter to a man whose blood was shed in the service of his country.—A good extraction!—At seven years of age, she lost her mother, as did I.—Poor children! who has brought her up?—M. de Nelcour.—She is no doubt handsome? Although she were less so, she would still be amiable; she is all sweetness and goodness itself; M. de Nelcour loves her as if she were his own child.—M. de Nelcour is a charitable beneficent man.—Yes, sir, an excellent man, as appears from his kindness to Natalia and me. He has been guilty of some follies, replied my father; but they were the follies of a weak easy man, and I can forgive his follies. Alas! he is still too happy, since his weakness has cost him only his fortune. It often costs more. Does he know that you have an affection for Natalia?—He has some suspicions of it.—It was perhaps for this reason he sent you from her?—Perhaps so.—Why did he not marry you?—Ah! sir, it was necessary to have my father's consent, and that I dare not yet ask.—Why?—The fair orphan has hardly any fortune.

fortune.—She has goodness of heart however, good sense and happy natural dispositions; are not these worth a fortune?—Yes, sir; but my father!—Ah! I tremble to speak of him.—Is your father then very severe to you?—He has been so, sir; but he has a heart no less feeling; and if I might venture to say it, he is good like you.—In this case, I hope to obtain his consent to your happiness. If he refuse however, I warn you that I have no authority to oppose to that of a father; and even you yourself, Alexis, must obey him.—Yes, sir, yes, were it to cost me my life I promise you that I shall. Never did son respect and love his father more than I. I confess to you, that I find in Natalia all that can be desired in woman, I love her tenderly, and can never be happy without her. But my father needs only to say the word; son, you must give up the idea of this marriage, follow me, and see her no more; I should obey without a murmur. Ah! happy father, exclaimed my parent. Alexis, go to M. de Nelcour to-morrow, and ask him to do me the honour of coming to see me at Flamais, and of bringing the fair orphan with him. I shall intercede with thy father for her and you. But give me your promise that as long as I live you will not quit me. I am old and alone, and stand in need of comfort, more so indeed than you would suppose. You will

will at least love me, and I shall treat you both as my children.

At these affecting words I fell at his feet and wept, and had almost discovered myself. But thought I, if his past sorrows were thus renewed in his mind, he might view Natalia with a less favourable eye, or might even refuse to see her!—I was afraid of disappointing my hopes; and in the state of disorder in which I was, my father saw only the gratitude of a young lover.

Next day, I went with a heart fluttering with joy to visit M. de Nelcour. You have crowned your favours said I to him, and I come to thank you. M. de Vaneville, that virtuous old man who is sunk in melancholy, and to whom heaven has deigned consolation—Adore with me, sir, the hand which led me hither. M. de Vaneville is my father. Yes, sir, heaven has employed you to restore me to him, and to you I owe the hope of softening his heart. Call Natalia. It remains with her to complete my happiness, and I would gladly interest her in my fortune.

She came, I related what had passed between my father and me: and as Natalia by degrees understood

stood my secret, the emotion which she discovered, her blushes, her innocent and artless joy acquainted me likewise with hers. She confessed that she had thought of me when I was absent with tears; that she had often wished that she were working in the garden beside me; that her good angel had foretold to her in a dream that Alexis was to be her husband; and that she had vowed that if the dream were accomplished, we should raise an altar to that benevolent angel in an arbour in the garden which we had cultivated together.

We now proceeded all three to Flamais. She appeared before my father in a simple rustic dress; and her graceful modesty, her ingenuous language, the native beauty of her mind, and the proofs of a cultivated understanding which she undesignedly discovered charmed the good old man. Her beauty rendered her still more engaging in his eyes. He expressed himself highly pleased with M. de Nelcour for having so carefully conducted her education, detained them three days with him, and during that time continued to be chiefly taken up with our lovely orphan. At last, when she was going to return to Fleury; I have determined, said he to me, I will write to your father. You shall bear my letter; and if he approve as I presume that he



will of this marriage, bring him with you. Tell me his name, and the name of Natalia's father.

I then felt all the muscles in my body shake, and all my veins throb. Sir, said I, I tremble at the thought of the confession which I am about to make. The consent of my father is not all that I have to solicit; and since you are so good I must begin with asking your pardon. My pardon! replied my father with astonishment, how have you wronged me?—Yes, Sir, I have. You behold before you a guilty but penitent son. If my tears can affect you, I must have recourse to these: for to deal freely with my generous protector, the early part of my youth has perhaps been a cause of cruel uneasiness to my father. How? asked he, with an air of confusion and hesitation.—By the violence and fullness of my temper.

While he listened, his eyes were fixed on mine, his knees trembled, and his hands shook with increasing tremor at every word I spoke. Ah! cried I at last, in the name of nature and of your own blood, sir, obtain forgiveness for a young man who undutifully eloped from his father, and for these seven years has not dared to appear before him. Having said these words, I kneeled. Ah! my poor son,

son, is it thou? cried he, throwing himself upon me and locking me in his arms. While my sobbing heart seemed as if it would burst with the unutterable emotions with which it was affected, I felt my face wet with his tears. Ah! these are sweet, said he; let them flow: many bitterer have I wept.—Ah! my father! my father! can you pardon me, the unhappy cause of your shedding so many tears?—Yes, I pardon thee, and all is forgotten since thou art restored. But sure, thou wilt not again afflict and distress my old-age; Who is this young woman whom you are desirous to marry? Make yourself easy upon this head, father: Mademoiselle de Leonval is not unworthy of bearing your name. At these words all was cleared up.

Come, said he, to M. de Nelcour; come, let me thank you. Much do I owe you. You restore me my son; you restore him corrected. And you, daughter of a man whose blood is dear to me, whose memory I honour, come with your husband and make my old days happy. We were married in the same village, and in the same cloaths which we had put on when we came to Fleury.

Such was the story of Alexis; and when he had ended, we returned to his father. Cideville, said

the old man, you now know all; give us your advice. My children are happy with me; should I leave them? M. de Nelcour is of opinion that in this retired spot, leading in obscurity an active and peaceful life, bringing up our little ones, enjoying the pleasures of life at a small expence, and rich enough to afford ourselves those which are to be found in beneficence, we form a little tribe of lovers of the country whom every tongue must bless.

He was right, cried Voltaire. What he talks of, has always been my favourite chimera; happy will they be who realise it. I was of Voltaire's opinion. But he perceiving that Vauvenargue did not seem to enter into these ideas, again said; in the rage of an epidemical distemper, it is one's duty to keep beyond the sphere of infection. Suppose then that this happened in the time of the regency. And in those days, where was there a better place for a worthy man, and a young and innocent woman? Yes, I would have said to the excellent pair, remain where you are; give me robust and healthy children; inspire them with your own love of the beauties of nature and of poetry; let them learn from their father to read Virgil and Horace, and to cultivate their gardens.

Vauvenargue

Vauvenargue smiled, and took up the conversation. To souls of a soft and pliant temper, said he, I would give this advice: for a man of that character might soon become vicious through weakness, amidst the vices of the times. Were I to meet with a man of stern inflexible probity, and whose native goodness were as steady as that of Alexis; if beside him I found a young woman habituated from infancy to simple modest manners, and to innocent pleasures, I would not injure them so far as to hide them from the intercourse of the world; I should rather press them to go and shame it into virtue. Meritorious indeed,—to be good among the good! it is in the face of vice, of frontless vice, that virtue is truly glorious. Is a life of philosophic retirement enough to acquit the debt of birth and fortune? Ought a son of a man of the law to vegetate among the plants in his garden. M. de Nelcour, indeed, who had wasted his fortune in the world, might with good reason remain in the harbour, and rejoice that he had escaped from the ship-wreck. M. de Vaneville, who had grown grey in discharging the functions of an important office, might rest from his labours. This I allow to be reasonable. But the son was yet young enough to acquire a knowledge of the world, and to make himself useful, and I would have had him in his turn to pay to society



the tribute of his cares, his talents and his virtues : his lovely companion too should have gone to shew her equals that their dignity, their happiness, their purest pleasures and their truest glory, depend upon the faithful discharge of their duties.

Such, replied Cideville, were the sentiments of the good old man and of the young couple.

All in good time, said Voltaire. This is still better, I allow. But if in the world Alexis becomes a libertine, and Natalia a demirep, remember that you, and not I, have to answer for it.

No, it is I who answer for them, said Cideville, and as they have already lived more than twenty years together, as constant and as loving as when they were at Fleury, occupied with the cares of their children's education, and carefully labouring to inspire them with good dispositions, I believe that I may safely quote them as instances of virtue, unspoiled by the intercourse of the world. Accordingly their father, to whom they pay an annual visit, in his retirement at Flamais, has raised an altar in his garden, to the good angel of Natalia, has placed on it busts of the husband and the wife, and

and has inscribed it with the following lines, which even envy itself cannot contradict:

So fair Arethusa, thy beautiful stream,  
Flows gentle and pure till it meets the wild wave  
Of ocean: so lucid the moon's silver beam,  
While its radiance illumines yon ivy hung cave.

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PALEMON,

A PASTORAL TALE\*.

AFTER having for a long while contemplated in solemn silence a tomb on which the following words were inscribed; *I also was of Arcadia*; a number of shepherds and young shepherdesses who had been mournfully impressed by the sight of that monument, went away sad and pensive; the lover beside his mistress; some with downcast eyes, others with looks of tenderness expressing what passed in their hearts; some taking hands and seeming to say to one another, since death puts an end to all, let us at least love till death.

While

\* Which explains two paintings of Poussin's.

While their hearts still retained the impression of those melancholy ideas, they advanced out of the grove in which the tomb stood, and observed in a nook of the valley, a solitary farm house, at the door of which sat an old man sunk in deep melancholy. His body was bowed to the ground; his head was bald, but for a few white hairs very thinly scattered over it; and he leaned upon a staff of knotted thorn. They came close up to him, unperceived; nor was it till he heard their voices, that he raised his head, and moved his heavy eye-lid. They were struck with his venerable air. An unfortunate monarch could not have appeared with greater majesty.

The dignity expressed in Palemon's countenance was however unequal to the elevation of his mind. A certain dignified turn of thinking attached him to his condition. The management of his flocks had in his eyes all the importance of the toils of empire. Every circumstance of the pastoral life assumed in his view a degree of grandeur. Alpheus was the king of rivers; the vales which he watered were to this good shepherd the whole world in a manner. Pan and Pallas seemed to him the greatest of divinities. The shepherds seized with a feeling of awful respect at the sight of this old man, stopped at some distance from the cottage before which he

was

was seated. One of them however went up to him, and begged him to say whose tomb it was they had seen in the grove. There, replied the old man, are buried all the charms of youth, all that gives delight or splendour to life. Beauty, glory, love, love successful and happy; there are buried with my only daughter all my hope and all my joy; it is the tomb of Lycoris. Palemon as he ended these words gently turned a look of sorrow towards the grove, and reclined his languid head upon his arm.

Pardon, said the shepherd, the indiscreet curiosity which renews the remembrance of your griefs. It was far from being my intention, O venerable old man, to open afresh the source of your tears. Shepherd, replied Palemon, sweet are the tears which a father sheds for his children. What other consolation could his heart receive, if he did not weep? It is the only pleasure that attaches me to life. No! Be not afraid of opening up the sluice from which those tears of tenderness are poured. Thanks to the Gods! They flow from a living and inexhaustible stream, and till I breathe my last sigh shall continue to flow. While he spoke thus, the other shepherds and shepherdesses came softly up. Yes, said he to them, the tomb which you see placed in the grove, with the solemnity of an altar, is the tomb of  
my



my daughter. She was young like you; envious fate has ravished her from me. Young Myrtis her lover went before her to the grave. They had not yet been united by the nuptial ties; so I did not mingle their ashes; but he rests beside her. Under the same sod rests also Nele the mother of Lycoris. And I am passing beside them the last days of my lonely old age, in expectation of the hour when the sleep of death shall likewise close my eyes.

Good father, said the shepherd, since you fondly indulge the bitterness of your grief, as the goat of Menalus loves the bitter willow and cytissus, you will not be disobliged with us for inviting you to speak of Lycoris; the waters of the rill linger and murmur around the pebble which divides them. Yes, said Palemon, I also delight to let my thoughts hover around this tomb. I love to speak of my child; I delight to recollect the fleeting hours of her lovely life. Not a moment of it is lost from my remembrance. I still see her in her cradle and at her mother's breast. I see her when she used to raise her little arms over the back of my sheep, and to play with their lambs; I see her when she sprung up, tall and slender as the poplar; I see her in all the beauty and lustre of youth, sweeter and fresher than the opening rose. Here a sigh interrupted his words,

words, and tears gushed from his eyes. She was my glory no less than my happiness, continued Palémon after a few moments. Hardly had she danced for the first time at our sheep-shearing feasts, when her beauty became so famous that a statuary whom the gods had endowed with the talent of moulding clay into a living image, expressed her beautiful form in one of his finest works; Alcimedon begged my permission to give the features and figure of Lycoris to a statue of Diana. I was perhaps too proud of such honours, and the gods have punished my presumption. Alcimedon when he had finished his statue, said; this marble shall give immortality to that form. (Alas! the marble is insensible). I shall owe my renown to you added he; receive in return this cedar cup, the last masterpiece I executed. I never imitated aught more happily than this vine with which it is crowned; these two goats who are springing up to browse its foliage are the most animated productions of my chisel. Alas! you shall see that this divine man confined not his gratitude to this present.

My daughter had reached her eighteenth year, when we were alarmed by an object of affliction and terror. Ten times had a ferocious wolf dyed the grass of the meadow with the blood of my flocks.

Nele

Nele the respectable mother of Lycoris was still alive; she was in great distress; my shepherds were in the utmost consternation; I myself was overpowered with anxiety and sorrow. This voracious animal had issued from the forest of Lyceum, and had spread terror through all the neighbouring pastures. Lycoris alone amid so much consternation and distress, retained the tranquillity of mind natural to youth and innocence. Mother said she, be not alarmed. Has not Pan, the god of shepherds, hitherto cherished and protected us? Has not my father every year sacrificed to him the firstlings of his flocks. Can you suppose that he will forget such uniform piety. No. It cannot be that he will permit his favourite country of Arcadia to be ravaged; the monster shall surely fall by the hand of some shepherd. Thus spoke my daughter, as if by the inspiration of the God. Ah! shepherds, to have seen her, one would have supposed that her looks gained us the smiles of fortune. Her voice breathed into every heart a degree of consolation, sweeter than the delicious fragrance of the most balmy flowers.

Her hopes were not vain. As I was one evening employed in felling an oak for fuel upon the edge of the neighbouring forest, the dreadful wolf appeared

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ed, bearing in his jaws a sheep, mangled, yet still bleating. His shaggy hair stood on end, his throat was bloody, his eyes glared, and as he passed with my sheep, he seemed to threaten myself. He growled through his foaming teeth. I implore thy aid, O God of shepherds and of flocks! cried I; and that instant with a stroke of my massy hatchet, I laid the monster dead at my feet.

I went immediately home, still pale with terror, but transported with joy. Well! said my daughter, this is what I foretold, father. Fortune, you see, can like the bee, change bitter into sweet. It is true, we have lost a fine ram, twelve of our sheep, and even the boldest and most faithful of our dogs. But who is there, father, that enjoys uninterrupted prosperity? Soon again, shall our pastures be covered with playful lambs; our misfortunes shall be forgotten; but never shall your victory over the cruel enemy from whom you have delivered these vales, be forgotten; It shall crown you with lasting glory; as long as there are flocks and shepherds in Arcadia, the name of Palemon shall not die. Such, shepherds, were the words of my child; such was her wisdom at so early an age. Her mother and I listened with astonishment, as if it had been a divinity that spoke.



You will readily suppose, continued Palemon, that I neglected not to express my gratitude to the God by whose favour I had been so highly distinguished. All the shepherds assembled from the banks of the rivers Ophis, Erimanthus, and Alpheus, to honour me as their deliverer. It is not I who have delivered you, said I, but the great God whose protection we enjoy: and if you will be persuaded by me, shepherds, let us sacrifice to the God who watches over us, on the spot where the monster fell. The festival was unanimously resolved upon, and appointed to be held on those fine days when the sun enters the sign of the twin sons of Leda.

A more solemn festival had never been seen in Arcadia. Young lime-trees were transplanted, to form a double peristyle round the consecrated spot; their spreading boughs adorned with a fresh and delicate verdure, met within, and covered it with a living roof; an altar was raised of flowery turf, cut from the bank of the Alpheus; the shepherdesses, with Lycoris at their head, presented garlands, in which they had fancifully intermingled all the lively colours of the spring; the sweet music played from flutes, hautboys, and those reeds which Pan himself invented. The reeds of the nymph Lyrix  
never

never sounded sweeter, unless perhaps when applied to the lips of the God by whom she was beloved; never will God or mortal wind those reeds like him. A thousand melodious voices sang in unison with the instruments; and the air re-echoed the praises of the God, the guardian of our pastures. I dare not mention that my own name was at the same time uttered in their song; but I was too happy; and all these joys soon vanished like a dream. At last, three spotless heifers and twenty sheep, chosen from among all the flocks in the valley, were offered in sacrifice. Shepherds, can you conceive a nobler sight? Alas! can you conceive a mortal happier than I?

And my happiness received a great addition, when in the games that succeeded the sacrifice, I saw my daughter, on whom all eyes and all hearts were ready to confer the prize of beauty, obtain, in preference to all her companions, the prize of excellence in the dance and in the race; when I saw her, having her brow adorned with a crown of jessamine, of myrtles, and of roses, run to conceal her blushes in her mother's arms. Yet this was nothing to the new emotions which soon assailed my heart.

The prizes of wrestling and singing were reserved for the shepherds. Myrtis carried both. I need not tell you who Myrtis was. His beauty will be remembered in Arcadia as long as Alpheus shall continue to run. The nymphs of Menalus and Lyceus lamented his death.

In the art of singing especially he excelled all his rivals. When standing before the altar of the God Pan, he celebrated the bounties diffused by that beneficent Deity over the country, none of us would have changed his destiny for the fortune of monarchs.

In his song he seemed at first as if he had wished to recommend to us the enjoyments of avarice, and described a ship laden with the riches of Corinth proud of its goodly burden and riding with full sails before a deceitful gale: soon however a storm arose and it was dashed against a rock and swallowed up in the deep. On the shore stood the avaricious owner of those riches, pale with horror, and viewing the wreck with a look, in which proud hopes had given place to dismay and the cruelest despair.

He next sang the exploits and the triumphs of a hero crowned by victory; seated on a triumphal car  
amidst

amidst a people who sympathized with transport in his glory; within a few moments the same hero was accused and condemned by the people who had so lately applauded him to end his days in exile or in fetters.

He then described a king in his palace, invested with power, and arrayed like the Gods in splendor and majesty. But withdrawing the purple curtains within which the monarch was supposed to repose, he shewed us how he was distracted by a thousand anxious cares and fears.

Far happier then, said he, the husbandman whose docile oxen open up the fertile furrows; for even the most uncultivated ground is less ungrateful than man. But happier still, the wise and humble shepherd of peaceful Arcadia, who confers all his wishes, his hopes, and his desires, to the possession of a thriving flock, a faithful dog, and an amiable shepherdess, the object of his love: I should add, and who returns his passion; but this, continued he, would be too much for a mere mortal, and is perhaps a felicity which the Gods have reserved to themselves.



Thus sang Myrtis; and the God of shepherds heard the praise of the shepherd life, as the most respectful homage that could be offered him. The victor was crowned with ivy, that ivy which the muses, the daughters of harmony prefer to gold. To his wreath I added, in reward for his song, the precious cup which had been presented to me by Alcimedon the statuary.

I was greatly surpris'd to hear him say, as he received it from me; I accept, Palemon, this inestimable cup, worthy of the nectar which the young Hebe poured out to the Gods! But, do you keep it for me; let it be sacred; I will not touch it with my lips, till the young Lycoris deign to drink from it, with me. Then, turning to Nele; Worthy mother of Lycoris, said he, permit me to lay at her feet what is dearest to me in the world; and taking from his head the ivy-crown, he laid it at the feet of my daughter. That instant, the air resounded with peals of applause, and a thousand voices proclaimed the shepherd Myrtis, for the husband of Lycoris.

Palemon, said he, this, if I can obtain it, will be my truest triumph. All voices express the desire of my heart: may the Gods inspire you; and may Lycoris obey, without regret, her father's pleasure!

I embraced the young man. Nele took him by the hand; and my daughter, in modest confusion, went to hide herself among her young companions.

You will naturally conceive, that, at this moment Myrtis must have been almost as dear to me, as a son can possibly be to his father. Next day, I saw him enter the valley driving before him a flock which Apollo himself would not have been ashamed to feed. Twenty heifers and two bulls, in all the beauty and ardour of youth; two hundred sheep, covered with rich fleeces, white as driven snow, with a number of rams among the sheep, clothed in wool of equal whiteness; fifty goats having their udders distended with that beverage on which the sovereign of the Gods was nourished in his infancy—and at their head, their lovers, with brows armed for the combats in which their jealousy might engage them: these were his flocks; and six Molossian dogs watched around them, and urged them forwards. Alas! Myrtis, to obtain the preference over all the shepherds of Arcadia, it was not necessary for thee to make this display of thy wealth. My heart, and the heart of my daughter had already engaged her hand to thee.

Palemon,

Palemon, said he, till I saw Lycoris, I thought myself happy; but, without her, I can be happy no longer. Not all the riches with which the Gods have loaded me, nor the fame with which Arcadia honours my songs, shall henceforth give me joy, if Lycoris refuse to share them. 'Come, my daughter,' said I, come, and see all the wealth offered you, if you accept him for your husband, who is destined you by a thousand voices, and proposed by your father. Wealth! said she, ah! father, all the wealth I desire, is a husband favoured by the Gods, chosen by you, and approved by my mother. With these advantages, Myrtis, although he were the poorest creature on earth, would be to me the first of men.

Then, while the flock rested in my folds, and Lycoris and her mother Nele drew their milk into earthen vessels; Myrtis and I fixed a day for the marriage. Fatal day! day of horror! marked out for such, it should seem, by the hatred of some God. It has been said that the spiteful jealousy of the nymphs of Menalus, who were in love with Myrtis, and envied his happy mistress, occasioned our misfortunes. But, I accuse not the nymphs: they would not surely procure the death of him at whose funeral they wept.

The

The day came: our friends; the altar, the sacrifice, the nuptial bed, all was ready. The sun had arisen over our heads in all his summer splendour: and while he who was to perform the sacrifice, chose out the victim, the young lovers, with their companions, roved sportively through the meads. We, older people, had separated into two companies; one party sat upon the brink of a pure, unruffled lake in which we had used to wash our flocks; the rest were at a farther distance; and we all delighted to see our children enjoy in freedom, the pleasures of that sweetest period of life.

Myrtis alone had left the dance, and retired to offer his devotions to the nymphs of the neighbouring springs. Ye, youthful divinities, said he, whose urns diffuse plenty and fertility through this happy vale. Oh! cherish, and protect a shepherd who comes to reside among you. His flute shall sound in concert with the murmuring of your rivulets, and the whistling of the wind among your poplars. In his songs he will celebrate the freshness and purity of your waters, and will extol your gifts.

Then pulling off his nuptial robe, he plunged into the waters of the lake sacred to those nymphs. But, when he came out of the water, pure, and bright



bright as the fair leaf of the lily or the daffodil, glittering through the dew of the morn; he happened to tread on an enormous serpent which lay concealed under the grass; it sprung up, seized him, and twisted itself round his body.

The air instantly resounded with a dreadful scream. I and my company heard it, when we were seated at some distance, and listened in terror. The cry was renewed, and we saw a party of shepherds, who were nearer the lake, lift up their hands to heaven, and express by their motions, the utmost horror and dismay. Myrtis was in their view, inclosed and nearly suffocated in the folds of the serpent. Alas! my daughter and her companions heard not his cries; but while the poor youth was struggling to disengage himself from the wreaths of the monster; Lycoris, gay, happy, and crowned with flowers, was dancing in a distant part of the meadow, and animating by her example a train of young lovers who accompanied her. O deceitful prosperity! who can trust thy caresses? Who can sleep secure in thy bosom?

I ran up, and with the iron of my crook, crushed the head of the serpent who had now unfolded himself, to make his escape. But, I came too late.

The

The unfortunate youth was at his last gasp. He knew my voice, opened his eyes half-closed in death, and held out his hand to me. He attempted to speak; and the name of Lycoris died away on his lips. I embraced him. He expired.

Thus the deepest mourning suddenly succeeded to the gayest joy. Nele went sorrowfully to the scene of the dance. Shepherds, said she, and you my daughter cease from your sports. This is no longer a time for merriment. The Gods have thought us too happy. No Lycoris, this is no longer your marriage day, or the marriage day of Myrtis. This fatal day must behold the funeral of the youth; for Myrtis is no more.

Myrtis is no more! was repeated with a cry of grief and horror along the vale. My daughter fell down, and remained for a long while pale and speechless in her mother's arms. We bore her into my cottage; and when her senses revived, and she again saw the light; is it true, father, said she, in a faint, yet piercing voice? He is no more! She asked us to repeat the circumstances of his death; she determined to assist at his funeral, and gloried in her tears, instead of concealing them. I weep, said she, for the husband whom my father chose  
for

for me. I was his, I am his still, nor shall I ever belong to any but him. I shall weep for his fate, till we are joined in the tomb.

Alas! we all young and old wept with her. The death of Myrtis was a calamity to all Arcadia. Your fathers must have told you so. The nymphs of the grove where Myrtis was born, and the nymphs on the banks of the Lidon, lamented by night the death of Myrtis. All our hills from the grottoes of Pholoe to the cliffty summit of Halefus re-echoed their complaint. Well did he deserve the lamentations of his country. He was its pattern, its glory, its joy.

But I, unhappy father! how deep was my distress, when I saw my daughter languish and fade, like a flower cut by the scythe of the morn! She was tenderly fond of her mother and me, and wished to live for our sakes. Ah! said she, when we embraced her, comfort me if you can, and preserve my life for yourselves. To you I owe it; it is my desire to serve and cheer your old age, and not to be reunited to Myrtis, till you are no more. But these sweet words were intermingled with the bitterness of her grief. Her youth and beauty melted  
away

away like wax prepared from the juices of flowers, which is consumed by the flame it feeds.

Her mother's heart was broken to see her waste away. Nele died before her. On the last morning of Lycoris's life, Alcimedon the statuary came to see me, Palemon, said he, it is not now for a figure of Diana, but for the mistress of the gentle zephyr, the goddess of spring and of flowers, that I would imitate the features of Lycoris. Ah! cruel that you are! said I, Is it to rend my heart you speak thus? Flora great gods! My daughter! Come, and see her wasted, languishing, and wearing on her lips and all her features, the paleness of death. This, alas! is perhaps the last day the sun shall rise to her. I am just about to bid her a long, long farewell.

That day she expired. Alcimedon affected with my distress, and being the friend and admirer of beauty, wept for the loss of the most perfect model his art had ever imitated; and it was he who in honour to the memory of Lycoris, deigned to erect this tomb.

He would have set up her bust, and engraven the praise of her charms upon the tomb. Oh no! said



I, let nothing proud appear upon the remains of one who was herself all modesty and simplicity. The plain marble will be emblematic of the purity of her soul, and let it afford a lesson to our happy youth not to be dazzled with the gay prospects around them; let it remind them of her whose hopes have been so cruelly disappointed, and this at the very moment when fortune, love, marriage, glory, all the benevolent deities who interest themselves in the fate of mankind, appeared to be, with one accord raising her to the highest pitch of felicity. It will therefore be enough, O divine man, if you only engrave upon the marble, this lesson to our shepherds; *And I also lived in Arcadia.* Fame will tell the rest, and she shall never be forgotten.

Such was the story of Palemon. A long pause followed. At last, Delia, one of those shepherdesses, after consulting the eyes of Menalcas; said to Palemon; wise old man, so much affliction would at least be soothed by some consolation, if you had any surviving children whose affection might prove a support to your old age.—I have none to comfort me, replied Palemon; Fate has left me none. If you please, said Delia, here are two orphans, a shepherd and a shepherdess, who would be proud and happy, if Palemon would deign to assume the authority

authority of their father, and to adopt them for his children. Can that shepherdess be yourself, said the old shepherd? your looks seems to discover as much. My looks must then at the same time tell you, said she, who is the shepherd.—This young man?—Yes, Menalcas, my lover, who is soon to be my husband. He is not so handsome as Myrtis; his Delia is farther from equalling her for whom you weep. But, they would both serve you with such tenderness, that you should imagine them to be animated by the souls of the deceased who inhabit this hallowed grove.—Well, then, you Delia, with your Menalcas, come, said Palemon, come to my daughter's tomb, and swear, that you will cherish her father with the same tender care, if it be possible, with which she herself treated him; And I for my part will promise to love you, not indeed as I loved my daughter, but as dearly as I can love any thing but Lycoris.

This adoption was solemnly confirmed at the tomb; the shepherds and shepherdesses witnessed the mutual vows. They left Menalcas and Delia with the old man; and next day returned to assist at their wedding. No insolent joy appeared on the occasion. Love and happiness were veiled in silence. Palemon conducted the pair to the altar; and as he

joined their hands, bathed them with his tears. But, his tears insensibly lost their bitterness. A young family rose around him, and sometimes diverted his melancholy: and after having been long the happiest, and long the most unhappy of the shepherds of Arcadia, he in his old days enjoyed the last consolation that remains to the virtuous man when depressed by afflictions which admit of no remedy, the consolation of doing good, and of looking back with tender regret upon the past.

—Well, then, you Della, said this hallowed grove—  
with your Melanias, come, said Melanias, come to my daughter's tomb, and there, that you will see—

### LUCIA AND MELANIA,

#### A NOVEL.

**T**HE death of Lewis XII. had in some sort changed the spirit of the nation. A new reign brings always new manners. Cabals and intrigues distinguished the accession of Francis I. to the throne. The state long groaned under the fatal influence of the irreconcilable hatred between the Dutchess of Angueleme and the Constable of Bourbon. The family of Guise were inflamed with no less animosity against that of Montmorenci. These quarrels produced general confusion and discontent. That

happened



happened which is naturally to be expected from faction and personal quarrels. The creatures of both were sacrificed to the opposite interests of their chiefs.

The Marquis de Rumiguy, allied to the first families of the kingdom, became disgusted with the Court, and foresaw the storms which were arising. Weary of the fluctuations of court-favour, and having discovered the littleness and emptiness of all the objects of ambition; tired of the slavery which it imposed; and above all desiring to enjoy the charms of nature, truth, and solitary reflection,—he retired to one of his seats in Picardy. His leisure hours were there spent in the amusements of hunting and fishing, and in the innocent pleasures of husbandry. He was studious to contribute to the happiness of his vassals, sought to attach them to their master, and their country, and avoided whatever could have the effect to recall to his mind the insipid and dangerous life he had formerly led. This philosophical turn of mind which cannot but appear surprising in a Courtier who was yet young, did not prevent the Marquis from associating with the best company in the province. He had been left a widower, and had two daughters. One of his female relations who lived with him, acted to



them the part of a mother, and directed their education.

There was a marked distinction in their characters, virtues, and charms. Lucia was one of those imperious beauties which subdue rather than affect the heart. Every feature in her aspect and manners discovered a desire for power. She had only one way of pleasing, and knew only how to impose laws. Yet, under a haughty and contemptuous air, she concealed an exalted and feeling soul. Melania, again, attracted, but less compulsively the homage of those who beheld her. She might have been said to be ignorant of her own charms. An amiable gentleness marked all her actions: and this gave her a power, far above the power of beauty. She had numberless charms; while Lucia had only those of personal appearance. The eldest, in a word, seemed to command admiration and love. The youngest insensibly inspired love, while those who felt it, thought it merely esteem.

These sisters lived in harmony and mutual friendship. They confided to one another all the little secrets of their young hearts. They had now attained the age when love first begins to insinuate itself. Their father was desirous of settling the eldest

eldest in marriage, and several gentlemen had already aspired to her hand, when Count d'Estival appeared in the Marquis de Rumiguy's circle.

The Count was one of those few men who have nothing but fortune to complain of. His fortune was very moderate. But this was more than compensated by the endowments of nature. He was high-born; and his personal merit was above all the advantages nobility could confer; with the more solid, he possessed in the happiest perfection all the more elegant accomplishments. His wit and good sense were joined with a feeling heart. He made it less his object to shine than to move. The slightest expressions he uttered were insinuating and affecting. None could hear him without experiencing an emotion in his favour which time could not remove. Above all he possessed the happy art of giving the tone to the conversation of the company with whom he mingled, while he seemed to receive it from them. Diana of Poitiers, the finest woman of the age, who was named by idolatry the goddess of the Graces had distinguished d'Estival among the courtiers about her. A young nobleman so distinguished might aspire to the highest conquest among the fair.

It

It will not appear surprising that d'Estival thus handsome and accomplished should make an impression on the hearts of the two sisters. A new day seemed to break in upon them, and their hearts were agitated with new desires. Nature yielded to love. They fell both secretly in love with the Count; and dissimulation arose with the growing passion. Lucia and Melania became now less anxious to enjoy each other's company. They had now fewer trifles to communicate to one another. They became both pensive, and mused much in secret.

Melania first observed that Lucia was no longer the same to her; either her attachment to her sister, or perhaps a spark of jealousy affecting her, although she was yet scarcely sensible of it,—led her to this discovery. Her love was confined to her own bosom, and she seemed to avoid questioning her own heart upon this subject. However, she could but own to herself that d'Estival was amiable: and she began to feel how agreeable it would be to make him share the soft anxiety which at sight of him, always affected her breast. She sought yet dreaded his presence. Notwithstanding all the clouds which love and jealousy raised, she was at last forced however by her friendship for Lucia, to break through that silence which she had determined to maintain.

Sister,

Sister, said Melania, I yield to an impulse which I cannot withstand. I have long felt an inward struggle: my tenderness cannot be repressed. — What have I done, my sister? you no longer see me with the same eye! you reject me! you estrange yourself from me! your secrets are no longer mine! mine you no longer seek to discover! Speak, sister; my dear sister, in the name of friendship, I conjure you, speak; tell me, in what I have injured or dis-oblinded you. Can I have offended you, — I who fear nothing so much as to give you the slightest displeasure? — If I had the misfortune to commit any fault to offend my dear Lucia, I sincerely ask her pardon and will make amends.

Melania dropped some tears upon her sister's hands which she seized and fondly kissed. Lucia, although now wholly occupied with her passion, felt that nature had still its rights. She was confounded at the words and melancholy of Melania. — Sister, you have not offended me. I still love you. But, there are times when the heart is oppressed with melancholy, in an unaccountable manner. Be assured that I shall ever be the same to you. How! continued Melania! Have you griefs the cause of which is unknown to me? — Sister, may I speak? Speak, said Lucia with a sort of curiosity and embarrassment.



barrassment.—Will you not take ill what I say.—  
 I will not, speak freely.—Sister, I am going to give  
 you the strongest proof of my sincerity and tender-  
 ness. Consider that I have your permission. I am  
 perhaps wrong; but I think I observed that since the  
 Count.—What are you going to say? interrupted  
 Lucia, blushing, and in confusion?—Nothing, sister  
 —Nothing—but—the Count is amiable.—He is  
 amiable. Well! resumed Lucia with a spiteful air,  
 which betrayed the state of her heart,—what of  
 that? You don't mean to insinuate, Miss—that  
 I am in love? yes, you are in love, continued Me-  
 lania, looking her stedfastly in the face,—and he  
 loves you, added she, with tears which she strove  
 to hide. And what if I were in love with him, and  
 he with me, returned the eldest.—Neither of you  
 would be at all in the wrong, said the youngest.  
 The heart—you are going sister! yes, replied  
 Lucia, I cannot stay to hear your impertinence.  
 To pretend that I am in love, and in love with the  
 Count! Strange conversation.

She is in love, said Melania, when she found her-  
 self alone; no doubt of it. Hitherto I sought to  
 avoid knowing this fatal truth, which, yet, so  
 plainly appeared. I now find myself the rival of  
 Lucia, of a sister whom I love, and to whom I owe

barrassment

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the tenderest affection—Ah! Estival, why have I seen thee? why hast thou come to destroy the mutual affection of two hearts united still more closely by the ties of friendship than of blood? Alas this friendship was our highest happiness; it was all that we desired: it afforded the sweetest and most innocent pleasure. It is lost for ever. Ah! what emotions do I feel.—It is love—but I am not beloved—no, I am not beloved in return.

Melania here burst into tears. At least, I may indulge in weeping. Ah! how little do you know my heart! I will humble, and subdue it. In vain shall it strive to seduce me from my duty. No, I will not be your rival, my dear Lucia, sooner will I forfeit my life. I am much to be pitied. I have none to whom I can communicate my distress. I can scarcely distinguish what is the nature of the sentiments I feel. And yet I feel but too well what they are. Unhappy Melania! Why should love produce such a change upon our sentiments? d'Estival surprised Melania a few days after, agitated with the same emotions to a degree which she could not conceal. His heart was softened into tenderness; he approached her trembling; and his confusion betrayed him. May I presume, Madam, said he in a timid hesitating voice, to ask the cause of your uneasiness

uneasiness? Might I but share it? Sirs, replied Melania, with an air of severity, if I had any reason to be uneasy, I should certainly not trouble you with my complaints. Scarcely had she uttered these words, when she retired, leaving the Count in great amazement. He could not conceive her reasons for treating him so; and was the more affected by her severity, as his passion for her was daily increasing. Lucia had first caught his attention. He had been earnestly urged by his father to seek an alliance which promised so considerable improvement to his fortune. It was natural to suppose that the Marquis de Rumigny would be desirous to settle his eldest daughter in the world, before her sister. It would therefore have been imprudent in d'Estival to ask the hand of the latter, even although he had been first struck with her. He could have no doubt but he must in that case have met with a refusal which would have ruined all his hopes of grandeur and fortune. Ambition had at first steeled his heart against love.

The Count had determined to acquaint his father with the situation of his heart. He did so; but was forbidden to prosecute other views than those which ambition had suggested. He was now however ready to declare himself to the mistress of

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his heart, and to transfer to Melania that homage which he had hitherto paid to Lucia: at this last interview his sentiments would undoubtedly have been declared, if Melania had not so abruptly retired. I must then, said he to himself, sacrifice my love and happiness to the ambitious views of my family, and the arbitrary injunctions of a father. Lucia is indeed worthy of my love: but who is equal to Melania? For her I feel all the ardour of true love; and yet must I smother my passion in my breast. I may obey my father, and become the husband of Lucia; but my death must soon follow a marriage so contradictory to the wishes of my heart.

Melania was in the mean time no less uneasy. She blamed herself for rudeness to the Count. At some moments, her weakness prevailed so far, that she could have wished d'Estival to have asked the cause of her uneasiness, a second time. Curiosity alone might have been his motive. The Count, she supposed, could have no other reason to be interested in any thing which concerned her. Perhaps, said she, I may be odious to him. Undoubtedly, he is very little interested about me. Thus, nearly, did Melania reason with herself. At other times she blamed herself, with greater severity, for indulging any sentiments of tenderness towards the



object of her hopeless love. She would have been displeased with him, had he ventured to discover his passion by any looks or expressions in which it might have appeared. She sought, yet avoided his company; was afraid of seeing him, yet would often steal a tender glance at him. It was as if she had been animated by two souls of discordant sentiments, who tyrannized over each other by turns. At last, while her heart was divided between her sister and her lover, and she was vainly struggling to repress a violent passion, she fell dangerously ill.

Lucia immediately felt all her tenderness revived. She hastened to the sick-bed of Melania, pressed her in her arms, and wept over her. What is the matter with my dear Melania? said she earnestly. I would now read what is passing in her heart. For these several days you have appeared melancholy. The cause I cannot divine. Tell me frankly; we are alone: it is your dear Lucia, your tender sister, your best friend, who sues for your confidence. Ah! sister, said Melania, uttering a deep sigh, and viewing Lucia, with a look of mingled tenderness and sorrow,—leave me to die, my sister. —No, dear Melania, you shall not die: my life is bound up in yours: speak plainly: your situation affects me.—You take an interest in my fate, then?

then? Can you doubt it? you are unhappy, tell me why? my dear Melania! your griefs shall be mine. —Would you, sister, have me to confide my anxieties to you? you cannot remove them. —Why should you despair?—Your friendship will be offended. —It cannot. Yet, once more, my dear Melania, I intreat you, open your heart to me. —Sister! sister! is it to you I should open my heart? —Who will sooner relieve, or console you than your sister? —Do you still insist? —By all our past tenderness, I conjure you. —Well! cried Melania, taking her arm, since you insist upon it, the secret of this heart shall be revealed. Know that I love, I adore—Whom, interrupted Lucia, with a quivering voice; whom?—D'Estival, whom you love, and who, no doubt, loves you—What say you?—I will not, sister, stand in the way of a mutual inclination which my reason approves. I ask only one favour: I repeat the request. Let me die; and let my weakness remain unknown to all beside yourself. It is absolutely criminal in me, and that in the highest degree, to have so wounded and racked your heart. Conceal from d'Estival the source of my ills, and of your own; our honour is concerned. Forgive me, dear Lucia? You have a heart: You must be sensible, that my fault is involuntary: I am punished! I shall soon breathe my

last sighs in the bosom of my sister. Live you, to love the Count, and be beloved by him—You love d'Estival, sister, replied Lucia, and shed a torrent of tears.—She immediately withdrew herself from the arms of the agitated Melania, but instantly clasped her beloved sister again to her breast. You, sister, it is you must live, said Lucia. Since the wishes of our hearts interfere, I will sacrifice my love; I will not marry the Count.—No, too generous sister, said Melania, I will not abuse your goodness, or rather your pity; I should be cruel and barbarous were I to do so. To you is d'Estival destined; you must receive his hand . . . . and . . . . it is for me to die—My God! how is it with you? Your brow is pale as death.

Melania fainted. Lucia was carried to her room senseless. Soon as she recovered, generosity prevailed in her heart over love, and she returned eagerly to her sister.—Pardon my weakness, sister; my courage is now confirmed; I can answer for myself. Yes, I should, no doubt, think myself happy to be the wife of Count—Melania, I love him: I can no longer deny it. Every thing concurs to reveal my unhappy passion. But, how could I be happy, if the accomplishment of my wishes were to prove the cause of your death. Yes, I feel that  
the

the force of my friendship is at least equal to that of my love. Dear sister, look not on my tears: listen not to my sighs: think not of the tortures my heart may feel: but live to be beloved by your sister, and friend.—Ah! sister, the more you are disposed to sacrifice your happiness to mine, so much the more must it become me to arm my heart against your kindness, and against myself. So much virtue and generosity in you can serve only to render me odious in my own eyes. Yes, I conjure you, Let me end the life which I can no longer endure; and live you to lament me, and to cherish my memory,—to marry—Melania could add no more, and her rival here fell weeping into her arms.

Lucia would not leave her sister, who persisted still in displaying the same delicacy and greatness of soul. Can human weakness make a nobler or more severe effort than it requires to repress so pleasing a passion as love in a young and tender heart, and to desire the happiness of another person at the expence of one's own? Is not this the height of heroism?

Sister, said Lucia to Melania, some time after this painful confession, I have examined and tried my own heart. It has strength, I think, to bear the law I mean to impose upon it. To promise more



would be, to deceive you, and to abuse myself. Dear Melania, I feel, or at least venture to think, that, to promote your happiness, I can give up d'Estival—not marry him—but I can hardly say—not love him;—Yes, I shall still adore him in secret,——but, to see him in the arms of another, although she be my sister——no, this sight I cannot bear. Has Melania the courage to make this sacrifice? And here she looked on her with tenderness. Do you doubt it? replied Melania. Yes, continued she, I can. Be you his wife; be you happy, and make him so; this is a solemn engagement which I contract with my own heart, and it shall be fulfilled. Let me alone be unhappy; but let my sister enjoy that felicity which her virtues so well merit.

Thus did these two young women exercise the most singular and exalted generosity. Melania was affected with Lucia's behaviour, and revived. She had not indeed obtained a decisive victory, yet she seemed to have triumphed, and this was in the eyes both of Lucia and herself enough to leave her no cause of self-reproach.

Yet her passion instead of being diminished, acquired every day new strength. She avoided d'Estival, but her lover's image was impressed upon her heart,

heart, and still effaced all her generous resolutions. She was anxiously careful to avoid all opportunities of being alone with the man whom she adored, but whom it was her duty to view with indifference. Yet notwithstanding all her care, the Count at last found the opportunity of which he was so much afraid.

Why will you go, Madam? said he meeting her as she attempted to avoid him, and throwing himself at her feet. Deign to hear me but for one moment—No, you shall not leave me; I can no longer conceal my sentiments; I love you to distraction; I live, I breathe for you alone. I have been persuaded by my father to offer my addresses to your sister; she is amiable and respectable; I allow she is deserving of esteem and love; my family would have wished to see me united with her; and to seek the connection was enjoined me indeed as a law. But lovely Melania, I can constrain my feelings no longer. Every day I discover new virtues and new charms. To pretend love to Lucia would be base, since my heart is engaged by another object; it is for you only I feel a tenderness which is hourly increasing in my breast, and which I must continue to feel till I breathe my last sigh. Speak, divine Melania, decide my fate. Every thing

thing is already decided, sir, replied Melania, and bade him rise; you have offered your hand to my sister; your attentions have affected her heart; even honour commands you to love her. Only Lucia can now with propriety become your wife. All that I owe you, or can give is friendship. Remember that I am my sister's friend; and you yourself Sir—I have said all that I have to say. Let this subject be no more mentioned between us. I for my part shall conceal what you have now communicated on the condition of your maintaining henceforth a profound silence with regard to it; and—adieu, Sir; I must in future avoid your company. D'Estival would have answered; but before he could recollect himself Melania was shut up in her own apartment.

She then felt her love revive in all its force, she exclaimed; here my tears may flow without restraint, and I may indulge all my weakness, love and sorrow! Here I cannot offend Lucia. What have I heard? The Count in love with me! I adore him! And yet must I tear his image from my heart! I must speak to him of my sister's tenderness, and repress all the emotions which I myself feel; I must treat him with the coldness of friendship, and so indifferent a friendship. Ah! wretched Melania!

how

how burdensome is life ! let me die but not without shewing that a woman can vanquish herself and can sacrifice her love to the feelings of nature, friendship, and exalted generosity. Yes, Lucia, I will die for thee. He shall be thine ; thou wilt pity my ills and the horror of my situation.

Melania thus strove against her own feelings, and watched to repress even the faintest emotions of love which arose in her heart. D'Estival sent her several letters, but she returned them all unopened. Weary of these continued attacks upon her resolution, more in love with the Count than ever, and at the same time more than ever attached to her sister, she at length summoned up all her courage, and secretly retired from her father's house. Her elopement occasioned the greatest distress to her friends. Lucia was inconsolable. After some time, she received the following letter.

“ My flight needs not surprise you, sister. Every thing warns me to avoid you, and to forsake the world. May heaven enable me to conquer my own feelings ! I have taken the only step proper in my situation. I can, at this distance speak to you with freedom.—It would be wrong, longer to deceive you, or myself. I love you ; I adore d'Estival ; I cannot,



cannot, but you must be his wife. I have chosen the only husband whom I may freely love. I consecrate myself to God, and name him as the object of my affections. Ah! how can I? while my heart still owns other ties. How shall I break through ties which I at once cherish and detest? But, he will read the emotions in my soul; he will take pity upon me and restore me that tranquillity which I have lost.——Our hearts are the work of his hands; he will surely change mine, and check this unhappy passion which I bear in my bosom even to the foot of his altar; which even while I write, torments me more than ever, and adds to my guiltiness before him. Perhaps God will console me for the loss of the most amiable of men! For surely d'Estival is the most amiable. His image is impressed on my heart, and destroys my peace. What have I said? Dear sister, be happy, and love me. The Count himself may be my friend. I may, without offending you, or wounding your delicacy, promote his happiness, since your's and his must be the same. I give you both my blessing, and my fortune; it will place you in a condition becoming your birth and rank. I flatter myself, that my father will not refuse to comply with my intentions. Enquire not after the place of my retreat: you cannot discover it. I have changed my name and concealed

cealed my rank. I have indeed used every means to secure myself from the solicitations of your tenderness,—from my father whom I must ever regard with grateful affection,—and above all, to guard against the returning weakness of my own heart. I shall at least die with the satisfaction of having fulfilled my duty, and contributed to your happiness. Farewel, sister! farewel, world! farewel ye delusive passions! farewel, for ever—I dare not name, I must forget him, and henceforth think only of the grave; then shall all my ills, my weaknesses, my wanderings have an end—my love—— Ah! Sister, while I write, my eyes swim in tears; I die a thousand deaths; this is the last letter you will ever receive from me.”

The generosity of Melania had a most piercing, rending effect on Lucia's heart. The idea, that she had occasioned lasting misery to her sister, was too much for her to bear, she fainted; and as she revived, cried aloud with grief and despair.—No, dear Melania, I will not yield in fortitude to you! I will not form that connexion which it is my duty to hate and reject, since it would make you unhappy. Your flight and concealment shall be vain. I shall discover you, you shall return, see d'Estival,  
love

love him, and, if it must be so, become his wife. It is for me to die.

The Count here presented himself—Sit down Sir; I have somewhat to say to you.—I have flattered myself, Sir, that I have made some impression on your heart. But, I should, doubtless offend you, I should fail in what I owe to nature, to honour, to myself,—if I concealed from you the unhappiness of my present situation. You are not ignorant of my affection for my sister. She regards me with equal tenderness. Yes, she truly loves me—My sister, Sir, said Lucia weeping, has buried herself in a convent which we cannot discover. She has bequeathed her fortune to me; all her concern is about my welfare: she insists upon my giving my hand to you. Nor is this all: know, Count, Melania loves you. This confession can do her no dishonour. She sacrifices her own happiness to mine, and indifferent to her own satisfaction, seeks only her sister's. I leave you to judge of the distress of my situation. My heart is pierced through with sorrow. I should think myself happy in being your wife, d'Estival, and to contribute to your felicity. But my sister—good God! my sister!

Adorable,

Adorable, heavenly souls! cried the Count; Melania loves me; my highest happiness only consummates my misery. Never will I purchase my joys at the expence of the mutual tenderness of two hearts formed to merit the purest homage. Rather will I die of sorrow than possess you at such a price——Melania for ever unhappy! and I the cause of her misery! And is it impossible to find out the recess to which she has withdrawn, and to persuade her to return!

Both d'Estival and the Marquis de Rumigny were at all imaginable pains to discover the fair fugitive. Their enquiries however were unsuccessful. The Marquis in the depth of his distress acquainted the Count's father with his unhappy situation, and urged him to come and conclude the marriage of Lucia with d'Estival. He hoped,—such was the purport of his letter, that the establishment of the only daughter who now remained to him, might afford him some consolation in his distress. The Count's fortune was indeed narrow, but his birth was highly honourable, and he might aspire to the most considerable employments in the state. His father therefore accepted the Marquis's invitation. On his arrival, he found his son oppressed with a gloomy melancholy; his heart being agitated with



a passion which proved the more afflictive, because duty, probity, and even pity enjoined him to conceal it. He could not indeed avow what he felt without being guilty of excessive cruelty. Lucia knew not how dear Melania was to her lover. To her those tears which were prompted by the most ardent love, seemed only expressions of humanity and compassion. The Count had however resolved to undeceive Lucia, and to inform her that she had a rival, when his father appeared.

This old nobleman was one of those veteran military characters who suppose it as easy to struggle against the passions as to combat the enemies of the state. He had forgotten what love was; or if he recollected the idea of it at all, it was only to regard it as one of the foolish and fanciful illusions to which youth is subject. Honour alone inflamed his heart. In his letter he had given his word to the Marquis of Rumigny for the marriage of his son with Lucia. He looked to nothing therefore but his promise, and aspired only to see it fulfilled. In vain did his son explain to him the situation of his wounded heart, and the distress of Melania. Son, replied the old man, it is enough that you have acquainted me with your weakness; I have no doubt of Melania's power over you, I see it too well; I la-

ment her destiny and yours; I cannot avoid pity-  
 ing your distress; but beware that none but your  
 father see your tears flow; suffer not your weakness  
 to betray itself. You must marry Lucia; fulfil my  
 engagement, satisfy my honour, console the Mar-  
 quis, in a word, make it your business to promote  
 the happiness of your family, whose elevation de-  
 pends upon this marriage; you must obey me, and  
 at my command go to the altar; let me not see you  
 again till you are son-in-law to the Marquis de Ru-  
 miguy.—But my father—I have heard too much.  
 —Love—Love! What is love compared to ho-  
 nour? My promise is sacred: you shall marry Lucia,  
 or—you are not my son.—My father, should you  
 distress me? Ah! I am your son; I feel it by the  
 respect and the tenderness with which my heart re-  
 gards you. At least give me time to reconcile my  
 heart to the dreadful sacrifice you require.—Delays,  
 no delays—d'Estival thou wilt be the cause of my  
 death; once more I command thee, obey, yield to  
 the necessity which requires thee to fulfil my pro-  
 mise, thine, and thy duty.—My son, thou seest my  
 tears, wouldst thou occasion thy father's death?  
 Ah! my father, I will obey you. Melania in the  
 mean time, in her melancholy place of retreat was  
 perhaps on that very account only the more expo-  
 sed to the storm which she had fled to avoid. She

had expected at least to find some semblance of tranquility. Alas! love pursued her even to the foot of the altar. She embraced it with passion, and watered it with streams of tears. D'Estival was all that she saw and loved, the only object of her heart. In vain did she cry to God, offering up her tears and her despair. O God! forsake me not; let thy severity be discharged upon me; arm thyself with every punishment thy wrath can inflict against an unfortunate wretch who has betrayed and sacrificed thee to her criminal passions. At some moments I feel myself ready to quit this retirement, and to fly to where d'Estival dwells, and to speak to him of my love—To die at his feet. Where is my virtue, whose heavenly assistance I implore? O my God, my God, forgive?—No, my sister, I will not disturb your happiness. Love d'Estival. Be beloved by him. May you soon be united in the bonds of an happy union. I know what bonds are reserved for me. I am prepared to submit to this heavy yoke. O my God! I commit myself to thy care, and retire to communion with thee, far from the world, and from myself! Thou, image of him from whom I flee, pursue me not, interfere not to divide me from heaven. Ah! d'Estival, let me at least die virtuous!

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Lucia was in the time in a situation not less distressful. Sometimes she would think tenderly of Melania, and accuse herself of having wronged her; at other times she banished from her thoughts all remembrance of her rival: at times she would regard the tenderness which prevailed in her own heart with a degree of terror: she could not conceal from herself the idea of her sister dying the victim of love and sisterly affection: she wept for her; but nature is less powerful in the heart than love! Lucia adored the Count, and marriage with him became soon the only object of her wishes.

The day was at last fixed. The young pair were conducted by their parents to the church. The Count's father talked to him of the advantages of such an establishment, and of the joy it would give to all his family. What advantages? replied d'Estival, in a faint voice. It is your desire, my father, and this is enough! I go to certain death. Lucia, my son, no charms or virtues to offer to you?—Lucia has all that is adorable, she is not Melania, added he, with a sigh. No matter! you shall receive a proof of my obedience for your commands, and of my disposition to your paternal tenderness. I obey, and I go to the altar, to give my hand as you require.



marriage is your work: I sacrifice myself for you.

Only, after making this sacrifice, allow me to spend the few days I may survive, in the indulgence of my grief.

D'Estival as he spoke these last words, reached the foot of the altar, where he was to join himself to another than Melania. Lucia, in similar agitation, pronounced the marriage vow as if it had been a sentence of death. She was however now united to the man whom she loved; and was left alone with her husband.

Affected with the sad reflection that her happiness was purchased at the expence of her sister's liberty, and perhaps of her life, she felt herself unhappy in her new situation. Sorrow and remorse poisoned her enjoyments. D'Estival was equally oppressed with the same distressful sentiments. At times she could have with-

ed to have been less affected with the remembrance of her sister's misfortunes.—Yet in all her present

Lucia was far from foreseeing the terrible which threatened her, she knew not that her sister's love had been all bestowed upon her

news of the marriage of d'Estival with Lucia Melania in the place to which she had retired.

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tired. It is not for language to express the emotions by which she was agitated. On this trying occasion, all her virtue was necessary to support her resolution. She ran to the altars in all the bitterness of grief, and found some relief in prayers and tears.—It is done then, said she; the misery of my fate is finally decided. The Count is now my sister's husband: he is my brother! I must for ever renounce and forget him! Ah! can I? Ah! cruel d'Estival, oughtest thou to have formed such an engagement? Barbarous sister, shouldest thou thus have taken advantage of my tenderness and generosity? What have I said, unhappy creature that I am? Whither does a fatal passion mislead me? Lucia, d'Estival, forgive me, forgive this last weakness? The unfortunate Melania will soon be no more; you shall know the spot where her ashes are laid; you will come to water it with your tears; even my cold remains shall be sensible to your pity. My God! my God! can there be a severer trial?

This lovely victim was thus tossed by a confused succession of the most violent passions. Rage, hatred, revenge, all the fires, and all the poisons of jealousy racked her heart; her love was still as she laboured to repress and extinguish it, kindled up again with new ardour.—Let me leave this sad retreat, said she

she to herself, where I suffer every moment, all the pains of death. Let me at least die at the Count's feet. He shall witness my grief and tenderness. But her resolutions varied with the varying passions by which her bosom was torn. At last she conceived the dark intent of delivering herself by a violent hand from the miseries of life. She chose a species of death the most horrible; and the fatal cord was already in her hand.

Here, said she, I have the only means to free myself from the distressful influence of an unhappy passion, which was at first indeed but a weakness, although it has now become a crime. Even heaven has declared against me. Alas! I have with tears, sighs, and bitter exclamations implored its mercy; but, all in vain. My prayers are not heard, still I burn with all the fervours of love. What can relieve me from so heavy a burden?—Death only—Death! and what is there in this word to terrify me? Is not death the period of our existence? Death brings repose from all the troubles of life; and what is life under such tortures! My sister! my friend, added she, with a mournful accent,—she knew my heart, all my sensibility, my deep despair. Ought she to have married d'Estival, when I adored him, yet sacrificed my own passion to her's?

She



She is his wife, then? Come! let me put an end to a life of misery and horror.—Yet, what am I going to do?—To take away my own life? But is this life in my own power? I find myself shut up in a gloomy dungeon. But, may I leave it? Who has shut me up here? A master who is not obliged to render me an account of his conduct! the God of Nature!—with whom alone it remains to decide concerning my fate. It is undoubtedly his good pleasure, that my tears should flow, my bosom should be torn, and I should expire in torments.

She now fell on her knees, weeping bitterly.—O my God! I obey thine incomprehensible decrees! I will live, in all the bitterness of grief and despair; mine existence shall be only a protracted death. I have offended thee by offering to hasten the fatal hour to which all human beings are destined. Alas! my life shall atone for the guilty thought. The emotions with which thou leavest my heart to be tortured, will more than punish my crime.

Lucia, in the mean time, with all the ardour of her love, could not avoid trembling with horror even in her husband's arms. Her sister's image still haunted her. The Count, by every kind attention which a husband could pay, endeavoured to make amends



amends to his wife for the want of that tenderness which he felt it not in his power to shew. He pitied and esteemed her; but loved her only as the sister of Melania. Whenever his wife happened to pronounce this loved name, his caresses were more ardent, and he shewed greater sensibility.—How could a woman remain, in these circumstances, so long blind?

D'Estival, in respectful submission to his father, and in regard to what duty and integrity required of him, satisfied himself with mourning in secret. But, the wretched especially, cannot without great distress, confine their sorrows to their own bosoms. Our tears lose their bitterness when intermingled with those of a sympathizing friend; they then even change their nature and become in some degree pleasing; the compassionate looks of pity gives all the enjoyment that misfortune can know. The Count had an intimate friend in Paris, to whom he had hitherto confided all his secrets. With the intention of relieving the distress of his heart, by laying open his griefs, he had begun a letter to that friend, in the following words; "Yes, my friend, I am married; I am rich; I may hope to be yet richer, and may aspire to the first employments in the state. Yet, I am the most unfortunate of men.

My

My wife possesses every quality that can render woman lovely; beauty, grace, noble birth, talents and virtues. But, can one command one's heart?—My wife has a rival——” Here he had stopped.

Lucia, unfortunately happened to enter her husband's closet, found this letter where he had forgotten it, read it, and at the last line sank down in a swoon. In this unhappy situation d'Estival found her. He soon perceived the cause. The letter lay at her feet. She opened at length her languid eyes—*I am not beloved!—Ah! Count, I throw myself before you, I embrace your knees, and water them with my tears.—Ah! cruel that you are! I have a rival, a rival whom you prefer! and who is my rival? who is she, say?* The Count, confounded and astonished first, endeavoured to raise his wife.—*No, I will not rise till you tell me who she is. What barbarous wretch has dared to rob me of your heart? me, who adore you, ungrateful as you are? let her come to pierce and rend my bosom.—A rival! O heavens! Can it be? I die—And is so fatal a stroke reserved for me?—I am not mistaken then—It is but too sure—Melania—my sister.* At this name, the Count fell down before his wife—*you loved my sister!—I see it—I see it.*

My

hide

hide it not from me—dare to avow it—dare—  
yet once more, speak—I conjure you—speak—  
Yes, replied d'Estival, with a half stifled voice;  
this is what I wished to hide from you and from  
myself; yes, this is my awful destiny! I am sensi-  
ble of all your worth, your beauty, and your noble  
qualities; you merit all the homage that can be  
paid to the most estimable and adorable of women  
—but—say on—say on.—My heart had given Me-  
lania the preference before I was honoured with  
your hand. I had intended and ought to have bu-  
ried this fatal passion in lasting silence; unhappily  
you have discovered my secret; pity me, may I  
hope that I shall have at least your pity?—The pale-  
ness of death is on your brow, my dear Lucia!  
See your husband dying at your feet: he will re-  
press those sentiments which offend you: he will  
love you.—Lucia could only say, as she lifted  
her languid eye upon d'Estival, you love my sister;  
and then sunk back into another swoon.

She was immediately attacked by an ardent fever  
which alarmed all about her for her life; but she  
obstinately concealed the cause of her distress; she  
had not strength to speak to her husband; she could  
only lock his hand in her's with tenderness, and  
view him with looks of love and sorrow which  
pierced



pierced and agonized his heart. Ah! this is too much generosity! said d'Estival. Incomparable woman! and am I thy murderer! and dost thou still refuse to reveal my crime to the Marquis, and to my father? Let them be informed of it; let them publish it; and let all the world accuse and condemn me!

The Marquis de Rumiguy and the Count's father were attended by a physician.——Sir, said he, and you, my father, it is vain to hope that art shall discover the cause of the Countess's illness: you see the author of it.——How! I myself have destroyed her peace, and in a manner plunged a dagger in her breast. Let me acquaint you with my ills, continued he, weeping, I am the most unfortunate of men, I loved her sister, before our marriage; I strove to hide my feelings; they have been discovered by Lucia; and I am thus the occasion of her death! No, my dear Lucia, you shall not die, but live to be adored and loved by your husband. Promise to forgive and love me.

The Marquis, and the Count's father wept with him; and then embraced and sought to console the desponding Lucia. They tried every means to cure the gloomy jealousy which wasted her life. Her



sister had chosen a religious retirement, and there was every reason to believe that she would not appear again in the world: What hopes might not Lucia then conceive? Her beauty, her virtue, her constancy could not but gain her the empire of her husband's heart which Melania disputed with her. Time, and the delicate propriety of her conduct would recall the affections of d'Estival.—Ah! cried the unhappy Lucia, vain remedies these! Here, continued she, laying her hand on her heart, here is the seat of my disease, it is too deep rooted to be ever cured. No, I cannot live; I wept for my sister's fate; fool that I was! I knew not that she for whom I wept, was a rival much dearer than I to the object of my love. It is vain for me to flatter myself; the Count will not change; love is not to be resisted, as I feel too well! Did I consult my reason, it might perhaps recall me to life; it is my rendernefs which drags me down to the grave. All is over.

It is impossible to express the various agonizing emotions by which the dying Lucia was agitated. She reproached Melania as if she had been present with her: then asked her to forgive her transports of jealousy, vowed eternal friendship; and again broke out with reproaches: she would call on her

again

SIX

I husband

husband to come to her arms, and then reject him with horror; invite him to love, and instantly conjure him to forget her. All these various scenes of sorrow still ended in profuse weeping, and in fainting fits.

Neither the cares, the intreaties, the caresses, nor the deep affliction of the Count, of his father, and of the Marquis, could restore Lucia's health or peace. All the aid of medicine proved fruitless; the distempers of the soul are more incurable than those of the body.

The Countess saw death approach, without terror. In her last moments she displayed the most signal proofs of love and generosity. I am dying, said she to her own father, and the father of the Count, who sat by her bed, and strove to hide their tears, hide not these proofs of your sensibility; I am pleased to think that I am still dear to you; these are the last tears your unfortunate daughter shall occasion you to shed. My father, love your daughter; deign sometimes to remember her with pity; be comforted for my loss; you have yet another daughter. Melania herself will pity and forgive me; she knows what love is; I die in the hope of her forgiveness. My father, permit me to give the Count one small

mark of my ill-fated tenderness. The Marquis pressed her to his heart, and could only articulate her name. To you, Count, then, continued she, I bequeath all the fortune I have to dispose of. Why mention you fortune, my dear Lucia? you are concerned for my happiness! and, can your wretched husband be happy, think you, if he shall lose you?—In you he loses all, all.—No, Count—Melania.—Ah! say not thus, my estimable wife, the sublimity of your virtue restores my heart to you; and you alone, adorable Lucia, shall henceforth be queen of my soul. Ah! what passion would not yield to sentiments so lawful, so pure, so ardent?—My dear husband, interrupted Lucia, holding to d'Estival one of her hands, which he pressed in his, and covered with his kisses and tears, my dear husband, those are the happiest moments of my life! I am fully sensible of all the value of so generous an effort! but—I know what love is—my sister will still be dear to you.

The Count attempted to speak, but she continued, Forgive me; I yet live, and love you—but my cruel jealousy still prevails in my heart; but I must, I will repress it. It is but little to ask you to accept my fortune, with my father's consent; strive to find out the place of my sister's retirement; and

marry



marry her, marry my rival. I hate her not. Live to be happy, and esteem me; since I could not win your tenderness; drop at least a few tears over my ashes; this is the only return I require for my love — my love which costs me my life. Farewel, father.

Then addressing the Count's father; farewel, Sir, said she, you who have shewn me so much kindness.

It is all over! the bonds which united us are broken.

Come hither, dear d'Estival; you weep!

Melania will wipe away your tears.

These were the last words Lucia spoke. Her jealousy seeming to terminate only with her life.

The Marquis confirmed the donation she had made to her husband.

D'Estival sank in a deep melancholy; deep it

must indeed have been, for at times he even forgot

Melania: his eyes and his whole soul were fixed on

the coffin of his wife; her dying image seemed still

to stand before him; he accused himself of inhu-

manity; he called himself aloud the murderer of

Lucia; even the Marquis was touched at the state

in which he saw him. The unfortunate father,

while he wept for Lucia, hoped that Melania might

some day be restored to the world, and might yet be

a consolation to his old age.



A report was however spread, that Melania had followed her sister to the tomb. Accordingly, the unfortunate father soon after sunk into a languishing illness, and died in the Count's arms, calling him, his dear son, and appointing him his heir. I alone, and the Count, were the only persons who knew of your death.

D'Estival, overpowered by so many severe shocks, was ready to follow the Marquis to the tomb. His love had revived in all its former ardour at the fatal news of Melania's death. He wept for his wife and his mistress. He could hardly distinguish himself, the nature of the afflictive emotions which he felt. His father waited constantly upon him, and was from time to time pressing him to his breast.

A nun whom friendship had attached to Melania informed her of the deplorable death of her sister, without omitting any of those circumstances which rendered that event so melancholy and affecting. Melania, in a word, came to learn that Lucia's last sighs had been shared between her and D'Estival; and that she generously urged her husband to give his hand to her rival when she herself should be no more. Such an effort of exalted virtue was sufficient to overcome the feelings of an unfortunate woman who incessantly reproached herself for the cruel fate of her sister.

Melania

Melanie sunk into a lethargic illness in which she  
 remained for some days, without uttering a word,  
 or dropping a tear. At last, her despair burst forth,  
 and tears and sighs filled her voice. — No, unhappy  
 Lucia, no, I will not yield to you in generosity.  
 I, I alone, am the author of your death — and  
 let me also revenge you. I would live, to think of  
 your virtue and candour which I have betrayed,  
 — to have my heart wrung with sorrow, and tor-  
 tured by remorse. This I owe to a generous sister,  
 whom I have hurried to the grave. Ah! canst  
 thou see my tears? my sorrow cannot recall thee  
 back to life. I would do an hundred times, only  
 to restore thee one day's life. Thou shalt yet see  
 how much I shall suffer for thy sake; thou shalt  
 see how dear thou art to me. — I will leave this  
 place and go to die upon thy tomb; that I may be  
 buried beside thee, that my heart may be united  
 with thine. — thou art no more, my dear Lucia. I  
 know the weakness of my own heart: I will prove  
 that thy sister was not unworthy of thee; Lucia —  
 I will do more than die. — She now cast herself on her knees, — My  
 God! forsake me not: I stand in need of thy aid,  
 of thy consolation and support of heaven. O my  
 protector, my only friend, have pity on an unfor-  
 tunate

human creature who seeks refuge in thy bosom, and  
 with confident demands of thee a new heart to  
 fulfill her duties. When Melania pronounced these last words in a firm  
 tone, expressive of invincible resolution. The news  
 of her father's death reached her while she was in  
 this mournful situation, and loaded her with a new  
 weight of affliction. When Melania had first heard  
 of the death of Lucia, it was feared by those about  
 her, that she would follow her fast to the grave:  
 for three days, she had even been looked upon as  
 dead. This was no doubt, an unhappy mistake,  
 and the news of it had reached the Marquis de  
 Rumiſuy. The condition of the Countess was no less  
 distressing. His father had now laid aside all his  
 former harshness; he was now softened into sensi-  
 bility, and wept over his dying son with all the dis-  
 consolate grief of a fond parent.

A servant came hastily in :—She is not dead, sir—Melania d'Estival could only pronounce the name, and then threw himself in his father's arms. She is still alive, continued the servant, and the place of her retirement has even been discovered. We are ready to conduct you thither. My friend—my father, I will see Melania, I will tell her—  
Come.



Come, my father, let me fall at her feet; I still love and adore her. The father desirous to detain his son, intreated him to defer the execution of his purpose for a few days,—at least for one day,—even for an hour. But the Count's impatience could not be restrained. He set out instantly in a carriage, and was accompanied by his father.

D'Estival thus ceased to weep over the tomb of the unfortunate Lucia. Intoxicated with gay hopes, he again recovered life and spirits. He thought of nothing but the altar before which he might unite himself irrevocably with Melania. His soul had flown to the feet of her who was mistress of his fate. He talked in his heart to her, and fondly repeated with himself the most ardent vows of love and tenderness, heightened by absence and misfortune.

D'Estival complained impatiently of the slow motion of the carriage. Had he been borne on winged steeds, he would yet have complained of their tardy progress. At last he reached the convent. He asked to see Melania. She sent to beg him and his father rather to return within three days. What an age of torment, this interval to d'Estival! what was to be thought of so cruel an order? Could Me-

lania



lania have forgotten him? Would she love no more, now when he flew to her feet, and desired so ardently to confirm and sanctify his love by the most solemn obligations. He renewed his entreaties, shed tears, and represented, that he could not live for such an age of suspense! They still persisted however in giving him the same answer.

At the end of the three days, he hastened with his father to the grate. Melania appeared. Good God! cried the Count, what means this habit?—That my mode of life is no longer in my own power, answered Melania. What is it you tell us? eagerly returned both the father and the son, at the same instant?—I yesterday took the vows.—The vows! was all that the Count could reply; he then fell into his father's arms, who stood motionless through astonishment.—Yes, it is done, continued Melania, with the same firmness as at first: I have irrevocably devoted myself to God!—and can have no other husband.—Your vows! exclaimed d'Estival. I was informed, continued she, of the premature death of my sister, and of my father. I have done my duty; I have devoted myself at the altar to a life of piety and retirement. I at last learned, Sir,—ah! what reproaches do I not deserve from myself?—I learned, that I only had

occasioned

occasioned my sister's death—and for her sake I have buried myself for ever in this seclusion from the enjoyments of the world.—You are then for ever ravished from me!—How could I, Sir, have taken the name of your wife, after occasioning the death of my unfortunate sister. It was my desire to avoid seeing you, till I should have set an eternal and unsurmountable barrier between us.—D'Estival, judge of the struggles and torture I have experienced. I loved you, I blush to speak it, since my heart can no longer be either yours or my own. I ask only your friendship, or rather your compassion. Let us weep together for poor Lucia. Alas! it is our duty to weep for her. I with pleasure confirm the bequest of our fortune, made you by her and our father. Lament our fate. Think sometimes of two unfortunate young women who have died for love of you; for I shall not long survive my dear Lucia, and my poor father. Farewell, Sir, farewell, d'Estival.—We must see each other no more.—

I What! cried the Count, weeping,—can Melania command me to see her no more?—Let us not wring each other's hearts with sorrow.—Let us part.—Your presence renders me criminal in my own eyes, and in the sight of God to whom alone

I now

I now belong: he punishes me, and I adore his justice! Yes it is I who have plunged a dagger in the bosom of the hapless Lucia; I feel all the horror of my crime.—Yet once again, allow me to say, we must see each other no more, and—farewell for ever. Ah cruel Melania! replied d'Estival; you think only of the loss of your sister; my death you make no mention of. Think you that I can for even an hour survive this fatal interview? Do you delight to rend my heart who have hitherto lived for you? Yet look once again upon me.—Behold your victim expiring.—It is you my dear Melania, you alone, who drag me down to the grave!—I have hurried my sister thither; I see her pale, lifeless form laid in the coffin—her groans, and reproaches assail me even in this sad recess where I can know no peace. What would you propose, d'Estival? that while she is hardly cold in the clay, I should receive the hand of her husband! that I should become your wife! Begone, compel me not to hate you, I cannot help viewing myself with horror.

She was retiring, when the Count took her by the arm.—Sir, said Melania to the Count's father, I beg your help against him, and against myself. D'Estival, then, continued she, looking on him with



with weeping eyes, have I not too far betrayed my duty already? Its voice forbids me to see you, to hear you, to think of you d'Estival; if you love me, if I am yet dear to you——Ah! wretched creature! what have I said? Leave me to die in innocence. No, you know not all the torments you have occasioned to me; you shall not know them. They are terrible: death alone can end them. The Count cast himself at her feet:—Behold your lover. My lover! what do I hear! Oh heavens! Lucia! O my God!—Begone, flee, I say, for ever: forget me, forget me——Ah! this is too great indulgence of my weakness! Adieu, d'Estival!—adieu, Sir——soon shall you both mourn my death.

She now sprung hastily from the parlour, evidently tearing herself away with a painful effort.—Melania, yet one word more; do, but hear me; Melania, one moment longer, cried the Count. But, Melania was gone for ever from their sight. D'Estival lost the use of his senses, and his father, with difficulty bore him to their carriage.

The unfortunate Melania had strength of mind to quit all that she held dear. For, it was easily seen that the emotions of love were the most painful she felt. She had left the Count; but she could



not help looking fondly after him, and still speaking to him with her eyes. Her looks were fixed as long as he remained within sight, on that amiable man whom she could have loved, could have married, had it not been for the inflexible power of virtue which opposed the rising sentiments of tenderness in her heart. This stern virtue which so cruelly opposed her happiness would perhaps have forsaken her if she had continued to gaze longer on d'Estival. What a sight for a tender mistress? and none could be sonder or more miserable than Melania. The Count was dying; she would see him no more; she herself hurried him to the grave; one word from her would have restored him to life and joy. The sight affected and overpowered her feelings. What greater sacrifice could a sister require, whose complaints and reproaches seemed still to sound in her ears?—

At last, when d'Estival was in the carriage, and it was gone out of sight. Melania fell to the ground, where she lay some moments in a swoon, and then arose, and looked around for the Count, recalled his beloved image to her heart, and again sunk to the ground, shedding a flood of tears.—  
I shall see him no more then! I shall see him no more! It is I myself who have pronounced this  
cruel

cruel sentence! I who still burn with the ardour of desire! Art thou satisfied, O heaven? Lucia, have I been sufficiently barbarous and inexorable? My heart has submitted to a decree of the full rigour of which it was previously sensible. I might have been united with d'Estival; yet have I chained myself to these altars, and shall die before them—— No, I shall not die! this fatal passion, the cause of all my distress, is nourished by my tears, and keeps me alive, to prolong my misery. My condition is so dreadful, that death is the greatest blessing I dare hope for; yet death, although so earnestly desired, comes not to deliver me from a life of insupportable misery! In vain do I call upon it! In vain do I long to be laid in the silent grave. The hated light of day still returns to visit these sad eyes, and renews my errors and my crimes. Ah! poor d'Estival! why should honour and religion forbid me to see and love you? The most transient thought of so dear an object is criminal——Great God! canst thou pardon me? O God! O God! pity my misery, my weakness, my remorse——Wretched creature that I am! Must love for ever torment a heart which may no longer indulge it? Melania in vain called virtue and pity to arm her against a distraction of soul which was from time to

time awaked by the bitter remembrance of the past. D'Estival she could not forget. She felt herself tempted to draw his picture from the impression of him which remained on her heart. She took up the pencil, threw it down again, blaming her own weakness, and after leaving her work many times unfinished, retiring to prostrate herself before the altars, and returning again to this monument of the predominance of her passion, finished it amidst a violent struggle between religion and love, sighs, groans, and tears. Yes, cried Melania, these are the features of the dearest of mortals, the most faithful of lovers!—Ah! what have I said? Being

Supreme, pardon, pardon. Alas! can I have offended thee by suffering my tears to flow over an unsubstantial shadow? Can so slender a consolation be denied me?—Am I guilty? Can I doubt it, O my God! My guilt, my infidelity rises up against me; I cannot blind myself! My thoughts are all to many acts of perjury; let me speak this terrible truth to my own heart; it feels but too much delight in the guilty indulgence; it lingers fondly over every circumstance connected with the idea of— I feel this but too forcibly! it occupies, it fills my whole soul. No, I will not keep this fatal picture before my eyes; I will not preserve it to nourish a guilty tenderness—which it is my duty to extin-

guish



guish—I must repress it; I must remove the object from my sight, destroy it, banish the idea, if possible, altogether from my heart.

This virtuous resolution she prepared to execute. Her hand trembled. Yet once more, however, she cast her eyes upon that dangerous portrait, sighed, put it in her bosom, bound it round her neck. Each day she vowed to God to destroy that testimony of sentiments which she condemned; yet almost every moment, turned her eyes again upon the picture, watered it with her tears, and addressed to it her lamentations and complaints.

The Count recovered not from the illness into which he was thrown by his last disappointment. The remonstrances, caresses, and tears of his father could not recall him to the enjoyments of life. He sunk into a deep melancholy, and would receive no consolation to his grief. But, how should he have been consoled. His very grief was dear to him, and he delighted to inflame and encourage it. The pains of love have a charm with them which no hearts can conceive but such as know the fond emotions of love. No, cried d'Estival, no, my father, talk not to me of healing up the wound of which I die! May it rather be deepened, and let it remove



me from a weary life! I find a sort of satisfaction in saying to myself in secret, I die for Melania! and this is the only pleasure I can now taste. My father, would you have me to live, since I cannot possess Melania. When I breathe my last sigh, her image will still fill my heart! Cruel that she is! She is the author of all my ills; yet cannot I help kissing the hand which plunges a dagger in my heart!—But, think you, my father, that she may not yet melt into tenderness? Can her denial be irrevocably fixed? Cannot those vows which are to me a death warrant, be broken through? Is her engagement so irrevocable? Are the ties which she has taken upon herself so indissolubly binding? Are there no examples to justify her quitting the veil?—Have not instances been known?—Ah! wretch! how foolishly I talk! what ravings do I utter?—I have lost Melania for ever!—My father! might I not, however, see her, obtain me this favour; if she refuse to speak to me, yet may not my eyes once more gaze upon hers? Let her see my tears! Let me breathe my last sigh at her feet!

D'Estival's father hastened to the convent. He could not however gain admission to Melania. His tears and intreaties were all in vain. He solicited but a moment's interview; yet was that moment

refused.

refused: Melania still more and more distressed and went, all in tears, to cast herself to the feet of a respectable clergyman, and intreated him to assist and teach her to repress the tumult of passion in her agitated breast; unfolding to him the situation of her heart, declaring that she felt her resolution ready to give way, and was inclined to admit the Count's father, and himself again into her presence, and beseeching on her knees, that he would strengthen her weakness by communicating whatever consolations and encouragements religion could afford. The compassionate man wept to hear the story of her stories, encouraged her to steady perseverance in the path of duty, and forbade her to yield to her partiality to d'Estival, or even to agree to an interview with his father.

I ob gnivst talw I talk I what ravings do I  
Melania again triumphed over herself. But her victory was only a seeming one. The sacrifice cost her too dear, not to be followed by misery more terrible than death. From that instant her life was passed in a distress of a deeper and more awful nature than what she had yet felt. Her tears were dried up; she uttered no more complaints; only half-stifled groans, and accents of dark despair would sometimes burst from her, notwithstanding the restraint she imposed on herself.

Of all the passions, love is that which retains its force longest. Solitude serves only to irritate it. In silence and retirement are the strongest and most afflictive emotions roused in feeling hearts. The recollection of the cloister, when the sacred enthusiasm of religion does not prevail in the breast, rouses all the native sensibility of the soul, and often produces extraordinary convulsions of passion which terminate in death. When we are withdrawn from the bustle of life, imagination there awakes to array in more pleasing and more seductive colours, any object of our affections, of which we have been bereaved. We paint the dear ideas on which we delight to dwell, in lovelier forms, and thus take a pleasure in exaggerating the value of what we have lost.

Such nearly was the state in which Melania found herself. Her grief was, of itself, perhaps the sole consolation of which her heart was at this time susceptible.

A casket was at length brought her which contained a letter and a silver box. She eagerly took the letter, perceived it to be in the Count's handwriting, and read, as follows,

"I have

grieved



"I have obeyed you. I have sacrificed to you my happiness and my life. I could not see you again and I could not live without you. Read this letter. Before you receive it, I shall be no more. Could I cease to love you? Could this sentiment in which my whole soul was absorbed,—could it be effaced from my breast? Heaven cannot, surely, be offended with my love. There can be none purer, or worthier of the supreme author of nature who created us for each other. I cannot be your's; and yet I can never belong to any other. I have tried all means to conquer a passion which obstacles only irritate. But, ah! what is ambition, or what can reason do, compared with love? One look from you had far more power over my heart. The first moment I saw you, determined the fate of my remaining life; I was thenceforth destined to be the most unfortunate of men. But, it was not enough that I should suffer so many torments, should burn in vain with the ardour of love, should be forced by cruel duty into the arms of another, and obliged to hide my tears, and confine my despair to my own bosom;—no, all this was not enough for my punishment. I have been the occasion of the misfortunes of your family. I have occasioned the death of your sister and my wife. I have also hurried your father to the grave. My hand too has imposed the  
grievous



grievous yoke to which you yourself are subjected. I—I have sacrificed you all three. You have but too severely punished me! I have only one remaining resource, and on it I joyfully lay hold.

One favour I yet expect from you. Preserve the only present you can now with propriety receive from me, and the last my tenderness can offer. Adieu, my dear Melania. Are you offended with this expression? Think that I die without the name of your husband."

D'ESTIVAL

Melania confounded by this new stroke of affliction, remained for some time motionless, and at last laid her hands upon the box. By an emotion in some measure involuntary, she was prompted to open it. The following note was what first met her eyes: "Here is the heart which adored you, and never sighed unless for you alone. Can Melania, inflexible as she is, refuse it some tears?"

The heart of d'Estival! cried Melania. And this indeed was the mournful present. She became speechless, as she viewed it. She was laid on a bed where she died within a few days. Her last words were, O d'Estival! O my God.

## THE HERMITS OF MURCIA

**I** Once enjoyed the friendship of a Swedish nobleman who was endowed with so exquisite an organization of the finer parts of the animal frame, and possessed such delicate sensibility to all the beauties of art and nature, that whenever he gave his friends an account of the impressions he had received, his narrative always glowed with the ardent sentiments and vivid imagery of a poem. Moral beauty displayed in the life and manners of men, gave him the highest delight. But, even when he was in the greatest degree charmed, his emotions were soft and tranquil, like that gentle play of the feelings which is excited by the visions of an agreeable dream. He seemed then under the influence of enchantment. His soul was transported, but his senses were calm; only his words expressed the intoxication of fancy which he felt: but, in his language even, hyperbole assumed an air of natural simplicity. It was difficult to conceive that so exalted a soul should remain so unalterably calm; nor to believe that an agitation of mind accompanied with so much seeming coolness, could be really felt. I, for my own part, although accustomed to see him at

ways the same, could not avoid being surprized at so singular a temper. But, I remarked, those bursts of sensibility, those expressions undesignedly sublime, which were natural to him when he was affected with emotions of pleasure, never occurred to him when he spoke of any objects of uneasiness which he had experienced. His grief was deep, close, and silent. It is the nature of melancholy to express its joys with a mingled softness and ardour, while it conceals its griefs; and melancholy was the predominant feature in his character.

The Count de Creutz had been ambassador from the Court of Sweden to that of Madrid, and during his residence in Spain, had visited its finest provinces upon the coasts of the two seas. In his letters, he spoke of it as a country of romantic scenery; but, when I saw him in Paris, he described it more particularly, and with higher enthusiasm, I was pleased to find his imagination embellish the scenes which were pictured on his memory; but could not forbear asking him, how it came, if those were not fairy landscapes which he drew, that men did not throng from all quarters to fix their abode in such happy seats? Ah! said he, men take root, like vegetables, each in the spot where he is born.

As

As I was one day rallying him on the fabulous and poetic air of his descriptions of Granada and Murcia. What would you think then, said he, if I should tell you what happened to me, there? you would call it a romance; yet is it in every particular a certain fact. I insisted on him, as you may naturally suppose, to relate the adventure to which he alluded; and he refused not to gratify my curiosity.

I travelled leisurely, said he, over the confines of those fine provinces, not knowing whether I was more attracted by the charms of what I was advancing to survey, or fondly detained by the beauties of that which I was leaving. In a village, named Molina, not far from Carthage, I heard of a wild man who had, for nine years, lived a solitary life upon one of those hills which are skirted by the vale through which the Segura meanders. That recluse, said they, is still a young man. His aspect is gloomy and melancholy. His beard and hair nearly hide the features of his face; But, what of these is to be seen, with a certain dignity apparent in his form and gestures, indicate him to have been in a station above the lower ranks of life. None but a peasant of the neighbouring village is admitted to intercourse with him. This man receives the aro-



matic plants which he gathers, and sells them for him in Carthagera. Upon the product of this small traffic does our hermit subsist: cultivating, besides, a garden, which is said to contain a curious variety of plants.

In my youth, continued my Swedish friend, I made natural history my particular study, I have always found the book of nature, to be the most interesting I ever read. My master in Botany was our celebrated Linnæus. His lessons were still fresh in my memory, and I yet retained that fondness which I had caught from him, for this fascinating science. Hence I became curious to see the solitary sage who drew from it means of subsistence. Under pretext therefore of a wish to purchase some plants, I set out on an excursion to the top of the mountain on which he lived. When I arrived within sight of his cottage, I sent away my guide, lest the approach of two strangers might too much alarm him.

His hut stood between two eminences on the summit of the hill, and the garden occupied the space between them. There was the hermit at work, when I approached. He expressed surprise at seeing me; and with a grave, yet courteous air asked

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the purpose of my visit. I am a stranger, answered I, travelling through this country for amusement, I am fond of botany, and am gathering a collection of the aromatic plants in these regions. I was informed, that you pursue the study of botany as a man of science, and at the same time gather plants for sale. I beg, that you will give me the preference as to what you have at present, on hand. Sage hermit, added I, perhaps the illustrious man who instructed me in the science you love, may not be unknown to you. I am the disciple of Linnaeus.

O wonder of science! from one end of the world to the other, fame has gained this man admirers and friends. His name alone procures kindness and honour to his disciples. His school is spread as wide as the communication of his discoveries. The respect he inspires, approaches in its nature to adoration.

Happy man, said the hermit, you were then born in the same climate with the true Solomon of the North; you have seen and heard him. If you shall ever again meet with this oracle of nature, tell him, that on the opposite shore of the continent, he is heard and revered; tell him that on those hills where the Moors long reigned, upon the confines

of Granada and Murcia, you have met with a man secluded from the world, who reads his writings with a degree of delight which he receives from no other object.

This language astonished me, in my turn. I accompanied the botanist in a walk through his garden, which was truly a store-house of all the treasures of the vegetable kingdom. We then went out and botanized together upon the mountain. He seemed to consider me as skilled in the science, and even consulted me more than once with a degree of deference to my judgment. After a pretty long ramble, he invited me into his cottage.

It consisted of a wall of turf, encircled with a thriving hedge, the over-arching boughs of which formed the roof. The furniture was a table and two stools rudely framed, a mattrafs for a bed, some of the more necessary utensils, such as a saw and a hatchet: in a corner stood a sword, and by the wall hung a dagger with a belt of three colours. On a small desk lay the volumes of his *hortus siccus*, with several other books, among which were the works of Linnæus, whom he called his comforter. The word *comforter* threw to me a ray of light upon his present

present situation : for he who needs a comforter, must have some griefs to comfort.

I ventured to ask whether he were happy in this life of austerity and solitude? Happy! no, said he, but as little unhappy as one in my condition can well be. I wished to know if it was out of any disgust with the world, he had resolved to live in solitude. No, said he to me, men have been neither unkind nor unjust. I have no right to hate them; and then he launched out into an eulogium of his country, which was at once true, noble, and affecting. I imagined then that he might have had some quarrel with the holy office, and hinted also this conjecture to him. No, said he, my religious sentiments, are pure and fixed. Of superstitions which I do not practise or believe, I never speak. I have never had any business with the inquisition,

As there was in the gravity of his manners, a mingled air of gentleness and melancholy, by which I felt myself every moment, more and more attached to him, I begged him to forgive the anxious curiosity which the sight of his situation prompted in me; and could not help betraying some uneasiness lest in his present retired way of life, he might soon be at a loss for necessaries. He assured me



that his own industry, with the services of an inhabitant of the neighbouring village procured him abundance of plain, wholesome food, and afforded even a sufficient supply for all his other wants. I am no friend to luxurious ease, said I; but the life you lead, seems to me, I must confess, excessively austere. That mat is your bed, and that stone your pillow! Would God, replied he, that no painful reflections ever arose in my breast, to disturb my rest on this bed! It were then soft enough. You have suffered some severe misfortunes, surely? added I. Yes, said he, very severe, and I have been, myself the only cause of all that has befallen me. If it be any loss of property, or ill success in business that you have to complain of, consider that you are yet young, and at your age, a misfortune of this nature may be easily retrieved; If, by my credit I could, in any means contribute—Here he interrupted me, and drawing from beneath the desk on which his books lay, a box full of dates, figs, and dried grapes, and beside these an urn of water; stranger, said he, the man, who can live upon little, counts not the injuries of fortune among the evils of life. Ah! my brother disciple, said I, embracing him, do you not however esteem the pains of love among those evils?

At

At these words, his countenance resumed the air of gravity which it had worn when he first accosted me. The conversation was interrupted by a momentary pause of silence, after which he opened his herbal, and desired me to chuse out what suited me. I felt with pain that I had indiscreetly touched the sore which rankled in his heart. However, I did as if I had not perceived the abruptness with which he waved my question; but looked over his *hortus siccus*, in which the plants were arranged in the method of Linnæus; and thus gave him time to recover himself.

After we had for some time amused ourselves in examining together the fruits of his studies; Yes, said I, the sage of Upsal shall, in a short time know, that he has a worthy and faithful disciple among these hills. These newly discovered treasures of your's shall be presented to him. But, being ambassador from the Court of Stockholm to that of Madrid, I have still two years to spend in Spain: and Linnæus would not forgive me, for having seen you but once. I purpose, before leaving Carthagena and Murcia, to make another excursion through this neighbourhood. I shall then make some stay in Molina, at the foot of these mountains. Permit me to return then and receive new information  
from

from you, with an additional of the plants peculiar to this climate.

My cottage is open, replied the recluse, to the disciple of Linnaeus. But, he must remember that in this cottage I wish to live and die a stranger to the world. He must swear, that not a living soul shall hear him mention me, while he remains in Spain. I engaged to keep his secret: and after some hours farther conversation, we parted, with the same uneasiness at bidding each other adieu, and the same desire to meet again, as if we had spent our lives together, in friendship.

My chaise was waiting at the foot of the hill. I continued, after entering it, to muse on what I had just seen and heard. When I reached the village, my head was full of a variety of thoughts prompted by curiosity, and ending in numberless conjectures, none of which however appeared satisfactory. I concluded however, that my new friend had been unfortunate in love, and was still haunted in his cottage, by painful recollection. But, with what intentions, or on account of what circumstances, had he reduced himself to the rigid life of a hermit? His piety was of no austere character, and his religion, he said himself, had nothing superstitious.

in it. At his age (for he seemed not above thirty years) the first inclination of a soul that has received any cruel wound, is, to retire to solitude. But to continue in solitude with calm, determinate resolution; and after nine years to remain thus sequestered from the world, without disgust, impatience, or regret, and to persist in a determination to live and die at a distance from men whom he hated not, and forgotten by a country of which he spoke with the highest praise! This appeared somewhat unnatural: I sought for the cause, but could not imagine what it might be.

Two days after, I went to see him again. I gently attempted to revive in his heart the social instinct with which we are endowed by nature, and reminded him of the mutual necessity of living together to which men are subject. Regard not, said I, as vain indiscreet curiosity, any thing in my present reflexions which may perhaps appear to you, to be urged impertinently. Those circumstances which have determined you to this seclusion from the world are possibly local. Out of Spain, you might perhaps be persuaded to mingle with respectable society, and to remain in a state of unvaried solitude. If it is so, tell me. Sweden, although under a less genial climate, is not without circumstances



stances to render it agreeable. The air is cold indeed, but pure and serene for six months in the year. After these come six months of spring, summer, and a delightful autumn, in which short nights hardly divide the brightest, fairest days that rise. The sun is unclouded, and by his gentle and permanent influence while he is with us, seems desirous to console us for his long absence. His light and heat give us a rapid and luxuriant vegetation. The earth seems impatiently to drink up all his rays, to renew the genial warmth in her bosom. How delightful to see the buds blossom, the crops spring up and ripen! Our air is the wholesomest that blows over the earth, and communicates a singular degree of energy to plants, animals, and men. These are the advantages of a climate which you suppose to be scorned by nature. No, my friend, man is no where else more robust, more native, or more happy. Happiness is among you a delicate, a frail, and fading flower, but with us a vigorous and vivacious plant. You will see it flourish on the borders of our lakes, on our enamelled meads; you will there behold gaiety sporting in the dance with our shepherds and their chaste brides: the lakes you will see covered with barks full of our young lovers; and on the shores of those narrower seas, smooth and azure as the cloudless sky, you will

will hear a continual melody of songs of love and joy;—for our rustics are poets. With all the unconstrained freedom in which our youth are indulged, you will behold the reign of innocence and modesty as in the age of gold. With us alone of all the world is this age realized, or rather prolonged. We have provinces in which from time immemorial, the same purity of manners has been unalterably preserved. The inhabitants of those plains live in plenty, and religiously exercise the ancient duties of hospitality. Nothing in the usages, habits, or dress has changed. They are laborious, just, and good, and have hardly need of laws, so virtuous are their manners. In two years, I engage to carry you thither. I might almost venture to say, that I enjoy the favour of my prince. I am at least beloved by his children, especially by him who is to succeed to the throne. There is not a worthier man in the world. They will rejoice to assign you an asylum. You shall be recommended by Linnæus, and presented by me. This I can offer you; and till the time of my return, I can enable you to proceed to France in the first ship which sails from Carthagera, and there will I join you when the period of my embassy is expired, as I mean to stay some time in that country. Consider whether

whether in your present solitude, you are likely to be always safe and happy.

While I spoke, he melted into tears, keeping his eyes steadily fixed upon mine, but retaining his calmness and recollection. No, said he at last, with a heavy sigh; her shade wanders not in those regions you describe; I cannot bid it follow me over the seas. Ah! why do not I know where she is laid, that I might rest my head upon her tombstone; I would water with my tears the earth which covers the ashes of her I adore. I must not leave the land in which she expired; let me atone by a slow, languishing death for the fatal crime of my love! All was then explained to me. I sat silent, and mournfully affected.

I have now said too much not to go on, continued he; and since your soul is so elevated, your sentiments so compassionate, your friendship so generous, before my life is terminated by the sorrow which wastes me away, let me give myself the relief of explaining to you the remorse I feel. Remember, Sir, that heaven and you are my only confidants.

My name is Maurice Formosa. I was born at Zamora in the kingdom of Leon. I was an only son, and

and lost my father who left me a considerable fortune, and became my own director, at an age when the most turbulent of all the passions first begins to disturb the breast. I was travelling about with the uneasiness which naturally affects the heart, after it has begun to feel that it is made for love, but has not yet found an object on whom to fix its attachment. At Seville, while my mind was in this situation, at one of those entertainments in which the Spanish youth glory in displaying their courage and address in provoking and harrassing a furious bull, I happened to stand near a party of ladies, all ravishingly beautiful, in the midst of whom was one lovely maid, who though less adorned than the rest, outshone them all as the morn outshines and effaces the stars. My eye was no sooner turned upon her, than I ceased to see any but her alone. Her look happened to meet mine, pierced my soul, and kindled that flame which will never be extinguished till I breathe my latest sigh. But, I strove at that time to repress my uneasiness, and turned my view upon the combat.

In a short time, after some preludes, the only effect of which was to rouse the rage of the bull, a young man entered the circle who attacked him boldly, wounded him with his javelin, and so irri-



tated the animal that he turned upon the assailant, and came furiously upon him. The youth avoided his attack, but in leaping backwards fell to the ground before the outrageous foe. Stunned by his fall, he was within a little of being trampled under the feet of the bull. That instant, I heard a voice exclaim, *Ah! my brother! my brother!* It was she herself. The cry pierced my soul. I turned, and saw her hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, and terror strongly expressed in her countenance. In one moment, I had sprung forward, leaped the barrier, and with my sword in my hand, stood exposed to all the rage of the bull. I provoked him, turned him upon myself, and thus gave the young man who had fallen before him, time to escape. Others joined me; and as I was neither armed nor dressed for entering the lists, I returned to my place upon the amphitheatre.

The spectators by a general and involuntary movement expressed their applause of what I had done. But, I received at the same moment, a more flattering and much dearer reward than all their applause. The lovely sister of the young man whom I had succoured, bowed to me, and with an air, a voice, a look by which I had been more than paid for the dearest bought victory, deigned to thank me.

me. Ah! madam, answered I, this were too much, had I even shed every drop of my blood in your service.

Next morning, her brother, Don Leontio de Velamare, although recovered from the effects of his fall, came to see me, and brought a message from the Marquis, his father, to let me know that the old nobleman was impatient to embrace me. I recount these particulars only to shew you, by how smooth and slippery a path I was carried into the abyss where I was at last overwhelmed.

I accepted the invitation with a tremulous joy which you may conceive better than I can express it. The family were assembled, and Valeria whose mother was dead, appeared in the company, among her relations. The eyes of all were fixed on me; my presence seemed to produce a general joy; and every tongue blessed me. Valeria alone, with down-cast eyes, and a countenance suffused with blushes, maintained a modest silence. But, her bosom heaved under the veil which covered it, with a motion which betrayed what was passing in her heart. Alas! the unfortunate maid had, as well as I, received the fatal wound which has since ruined us both.

Her father, Alphonso de Velamara, a brave and haughty man, seemed less pleased with the safety of his only son, whom he called a rash boy, than with the courage which had prompted me to venture, without other arms than my sword, to turn the animals fury from him, upon myself. He asked if this were the first time I had been engaged in a bull-fight; and when I answered that it was, he eagerly embraced me, as a man of gallantry and valour. It was this embrace and the compliment which accompanied it, that turned our heads, and proved the cause of our misfortunes. Ah! my friend! you shall hear how a rising passion laid hold on those circumstances which were best formed to feed, and to flatter it.

From that day, I had permission to go, from time to time, and pay my respects to the Marquis. I vainly hoped, but still cherished the hope, that I might, at some time or another find his daughter with him: and in the mean time, I cultivated the friendship of young Leontio; for he spoke of his sister; and my only solace, while secluded from her sight, was to hear him speak of her. He took delight in praising her, without reserve, and alas! without once doubting of the ill he was doing me. Sometimes, he would speak of the beauties of her mind, her inge-

nuous candour, and delicate sensibility; at other times, he would praise the easy gracefulness of her air which gave perfection to the charms of her lovely figure. Then, such of the beauties of her form as innocent security allowed a sister to discover in the presence of her father and brother were fondly described to me: and through this medium, so dangerous to an imagination like mine, all on fire, did I view her with the piercing eyes of love.

I confessed to her brother, that he owed his life to her, and that the shriek she had uttered at seeing him stretched on the sand, had made me rush forward to his assistance, without reflecting on the danger. He answered that his sister had observed this, and whenever she spoke of me, called me her champion. Her companion, said I, might well be proud of the honour, if he were permitted to wear her colours! Truly, said Leontio, to permit this is the least she can do; she will be flattered, I doubt not, by the request.

\* He repeated to her this conversation. She saw no harm in granting what I desired, but thought it simply a pledge of the gratitude which she owed to her brother's deliverer. I therefore received by the hands of Leontio, three ribbons, one yellow, and



ther scarlet, and the third, blue. The first, said she, is coloured like the bull from whom he saved you, brother; the second expresses by its colour, the fire of courage with which he was animated; the blue, like the sky when unclouded, is an emblem of my wishes that all his days may be tranquil and serene!—Serene, great God! ah! that fatal present was enough to darken the complexion of all my subsequent life.

I commanded my emotions so far, when I received it, that my young friend saw nothing in what I discovered but the exultation of self-love, sensibly flattered by this slight testimony of approbation. I ventured, however to express a wish that she had added a device to the colours. You know nothing, replied he: it was always the business of the knight himself, to chuse his own device, and the lady's part only to approve of it. You must then, said I, offer her my homage, and desire her to chuse my device from among several which I shall give you to present to her. Then I gave him, in my hand writing,

MY WHOLE LIFE FOR ONE MOMENT.

ALL FOR GLORY AND LOVE.

LOYALTY, LOVE, AND CONSTANCY.

My

My friend imprudently diverted himself with my gallantry, and his sister, still more unsuspecting than he, thought it natural that she should chuse me a device, since I was to wear her colours. Alas! love, without her knowledge, perhaps determined her choice; and with the same artless innocence, she kept the three devices in my handwriting, and sent me back what she prepared, written out by herself,

## LOYALTY, LOVE, AND CONSTANCY.

Here is the device, said Formoso, wrought in her hair; and as he said so, he took it from his arm, and shewed it me. And the billet, added he, on which she wrote it with her hand is inclosed under this agate which serves as a clasp to the bracelet. I still preserve the dear line: it is all that remains of her: I shall carry it with me to the grave.

I was ravished, continued he, with this opening success. But, the transport which I discovered, seemed a piece of folly at which my friend only laughed. Yesterday, said I, I was dubbed her knight; I now want nothing but armour; and that I will have. But, at what festival, or in what tournament, shall my young mistress see me armed in compleat steel, mounted on a handsome palfrey, wearing

wearing a scarf, her favours nodding as a crest upon my helmet, on my courafs, a golden bull, and on my buckle thefe words which are already engraven on my heart ; *Loyalty, love, and conftancy.*

Pity, faid Leontio, jeftingly, that tournaments are out of fafhion ; the time may perhaps return, when they fhall be celebrated as fplendidly as in the days of old. In the mean time, all I can do for fuch a new Amadis as you, is to procure you the glory of galloping with me, backwards and forwards befide the walls of my father's garden, and near the windows of a pavilion in which my fifter fometimes comes to take the air after fun-fet.

Neither he, nor I, nor Valeria herfelf faw any thing but mere amufement in this piece of gallantry which he propofed. Yet, for my part I thought myfelf inexpressibly happy in the profpect of riding in her view, and wearing the favours with which ſhe had honoured me. My friend was even fo imprudent as to tell his fifter, how impatiently I expected the appointed hour.

You never knew any thing more, faid he, ſpeaking to her of my folly. I believe he will run over the world to break lances in honour of your beauty.

His

His armour is not yet finished; the golden bull and the device are not sculptured by the artist. But, to-morrow-night, if you please, you shall see him, armed as becomes a gallant knight, ride with me backwards and forwards before your pavilion. She with an air of gaiety agreed to this dangerous interview, on condition however, that I should know nothing of her being present; and that the windows of the pavilion should be close shut. A feeble barrier this, which her modesty yet reserved for its protection!

Sir, resumed Formoso, after pausing here, in any other country in Europe, women have less pride and haughty dignity than in Spain. But, think of the burning sun which here fires the blood of the fair sex, as well as ours: Think of the provoking restraints under which they lead their youth, then think that Valeria who in the presence of an imperious, stern, and inflexible father, whose very looks always made his children turn their eyes to the ground, had been always under the check of the most bashful timidity, and now for the first time tasted the pleasure of subduing the heart of a man whose courage she had admired, and of exercising upon him the imperial sway of love and beauty. Consider too the simplicity natural to the female heart



heart at her age, which, with her esteem for me removed from her mind all distrust, or even suspicion of danger, you will then pardon her too great sensibility.—Sensibility to my love.

Leontio and I, accordingly, mounting two of the finest horses bred in Andalusia; he wearing a scarf and a white feather, and I gayly adorned with the ribbons which the lovely queen of my heart had bestowed, rode gallantly backwards and forwards, twenty times, before the windows of her pavilion. I knew that she was present, but this was not enough to satisfy me. I was mortified to see that the window opened not. Leontio, said I sighing, the time is no more when even the haughtiest dame used to honour her knight at least with a glance; but now this gallant homage is scorned.

Valeria felt herself hurt by this reproach. She opened the window and appeared. Sir knight, said she, with a modest and dignified air, why should you think me unjust? Why should you ascribe what is an effect of the timidity natural at my age, to an ungrateful forgetfulness of your favours? Can I be so unnatural as to have no pleasure in seeing him to whom I am indebted for the preservation of my  
brother's

brother's life? Are these favours I have permitted you to wear, proofs of my ingratitude or contempt?

Ah! madam, said I, approaching the window of the pavilion, pardon a momentary impatience and pain, and humble not him who has yet done so little for you, by speaking of his services. You behold me proudly wearing marks of your esteem, which I should think cheaply paid for by the sacrifice of my life. Add to your other favours that of deigning to receive the homage of a life which can have no value with your knight, unless you allow him to devote it to your service.

Well! sister, said Leontio, mocking me, did not I tell you, that you would have the honour of raising up a new Amadis?—Good young man! ah! what didst thou think of? What hadst thou done? And into what a snare didst thou entice us both? Sir knight, replied she, mimicking, with gay and artless simplicity, the language of chivalry in the days of old, the rights which you have acquired to my gratitude and esteem, are to me dear and sacred. I accept your homage; and be always interested alike in the glory and the happiness of the valiant Don Maurice Formoso.

Wonderfully

Wonderfully well! cried Leontio; one might even say, that you have the old romance language by heart.

After making this reply in a tone of sweetness at which my heart leaped for joy, she bowed to us, and shutting the window, disappeared from my sight.

This innocent scene, in which the brother and sister were both in sport, was soon to become fatal to us all three. Foolish is he who sports with burning coals, or poisoned arrows! But, still more foolish he who makes a sport of love!

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PART II.

AFTER a short pause, continued the Count de Creutz, my solitary botanist proceeded thus:

No, love is not a power to be safely sported with. And, when most simple, and ingenuous, then is he most to be feared.

My love soon assumed a gloomy and pensive cast, and would admit of no confident, but its object. From that time, I should have distrusted myself; for innocence no sooner begins to dissemble than its native character is lost. I left my friend to divert himself

himself with my fancy for the practices of chivalry ; but took pains to acquaint his sister that nothing could be more seriously intended.

Youth is naturally vain and presumptuous ; and with my anxiety to know whether Valeria's heart was really affected in my favour, there was already intermingled a fond persuasion that she regarded me with something more than bare gratitude or esteem.

I therefore hoped, after the pavilion scene, that she would come often back to muse and sigh at the window where she had seen her knight ; and every day, I repaired, at the same hour, to the same place, and there, with anxious expectation wandered about, like a discontented ghost, raising my eyes a thousand times, to the window where I hoped again to see my love. The cruel window continued close shut for a whole month. At last, it opened, and Valeria, in pity, deigned to appear, with Theresa, her faithful maid.

Is this then your constant walk, Sir knight ? said she, with an affecting air. From this I learned, that although she had not before appeared, she had sometimes however observed me : I also, perceived



by those words that I might speak to her in the presence of Theresa, as a knight addressing the lady of his heart. In this character therefore I spoke.

Yes, Madam, replied I, here I come to muse; if it may be called musing, when the whole soul is filled with one object from which nothing can divert its thoughts.—This thought which so entirely engrosses you, must no doubt, be glory.—Yes, Madam, glory through which we merit happiness, glory which alone can justify the wishes of an aspiring and feeling heart, glory which no generous soul has ever resisted; her would I worship as the star on whose influence my destiny must depend. But, alas! she seems to flee him who pursues her; she long refuses the vain desires of youth; and when at last she suffers herself to be overtaken, it is then too late; the prize has been seized by other hands; and all that has been done for glory has been lost to love. This word which now escaped from me for the first time, raised the blood in my cheeks. Valeria, more innocent than I, heard it without a blush. You are very serious in your reflexions, sir, said she; I cannot advise you to indulge in them. I, for my part, think hope the natural companion of courage; and I exhort my champion to be noble and just in all his thoughts and all his actions, and then

then to despair of nothing. Then changing the topic of discourse, she praised the lovely sky, and richly enamelled fields before us: I leave the scene with regret, said she; it gives all the pleasure I enjoy.

My love, or if you chuse to call it so, my self-love, explained all I had heard in its own favour: and I returned home, with a heart delighted with the sweetest illusions. Above all, these words; *Hope is the natural companion of glory*, remained deeply engraven on my heart.

Next day, I returned at the same hour, to the same place; but the window was shut. I returned on the day following; and it was opened again. But, only Theresa appeared, and she addressed me in these cruel words; Sir knight, Donna Valeria conjures you in the name of all that is dearest to her, to walk no more in this place by yourself. After speaking thus, she shut the window, before I could make any answer. I retired in consternation and despair. Would to heaven that the dear object of my passion had rather abandoned me silently to hopeless misery.

I passed the night in agony. What had happened? Had Valeria heard any complaints or reproaches

upon my account? Had I caused her tears to flow? Yes, without any other cause, she herself or Theresa might be alarmed, lest the pavilion might seem a place of rendezvous, and our meetings might give rise to disagreeable reports. This thought calmed my anxiety, and I approved, although with pain so wise a precaution. However, we could have no farther intercourse, no more mutual communication of our thoughts and feelings. What should I do? I adored Valeria; yet must not see her.

Such were my reflexions, and such the state of my heart, when I saw Leontio enter my apartment with an air of gay satisfaction. My friend, said he, I come to tell you important news. It is a secret I have accidentally come to the knowledge of, and which I have not yet mentioned even to my sister. There is a very great affair in agitation with us.

What is it? asked I with a degree of alarm which I strove to disguise. You possibly know, said he, Ferdinand d'Ovandes, the only son of one of the richest men in all Castile, and a man in the highest favour at court?—Well! what of him?—This Don Ferdinand is the man intended by my father to be my sister's husband.

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These words gave my heart too rude a stroke. My countenance was overspread with a sudden blush, and immediately after became pale as death. I trembled, fainted, and sunk to the ground. Leontio saw a cold sweat upon my brow, and when he spoke to me, perceived that I heard him not. My eyes were closed, my lips cold and livid, I scarcely breathed, and my friend feared, that he might see me die in his arms. Wretch that I am! why wast thou solicitous to restore me to life? Why didst thou not leave me to die, while I was yet innocent?

When by his care I was somewhat recovered, I began at first to ascribe my sudden illness to a natural accident. But, he was not to be imposed upon. Seeing, therefore, that he had discovered the secret of my despair; yes, my friend, said I, the news you have brought, is the stroke of death to my heart. I shall not recover. I go to lay me down, and die, far from Seville. Receive my last farewell.

Heavens! said Leontio, trembling, what mischief have I occasioned! did my sister but know, she who has so grateful a sense of my obligations to you!—Oh, no! let her remain for ever ignorant of the mischief she has done us; were she to know, it would make her too unhappy. What! and all this



by a mere frolic, without once thinking of it! Love is sure a terrible passion! But, what were your views?—To deserve her, answered I, by praiseworthy deeds, to learn from herself, whether, if I should obtain her father's consent, I might flatter myself with the hope that I should have the consent of her heart; and with a name and a fortune by no means contemptible, to aspire to her hand.

Why then should you despair? said he. Speak to my father. I know he esteems you. He has a due sense of what you did for me, and may perhaps change his purpose, in your favour. You will readily believe that I shall be happy if this can be accomplished; and my sister too would hardly be sorry, if you obtained the preference.

You must once more, my friend, said I, persuade her to come to her pavilion, and suffer me to converse with her a few moments under the window. I would consult her own heart, without witnesses. You have seen that this is an affair on which my life depends: and since you have restored me to life, preserve me by your continued kindness. Prevail then with your lovely sister, to hear me: and mention not to her, that another husband is intended her by your father.

Valeria

—Valeria easily yielded to Leontio's request; and Theresa herself when she knew my intentions, did not seek to hinder our meetings. I was alone, my love came also alone; when she had opened the window, it seemed the gate of heaven that was opened. What a charm do the hopes of unhappy love add, in such moments, to the aspect of the object beloved! Valeria had never before appeared so beautiful. She seemed the star which rises to cheer and guide the shipwrecked mariner.

No, said I, it is impossible to express what joy your presence gives me. But, the more blissful the present moment, so much the more painful are the hours I pass languishing to be admitted into your sight. It is an inconceivable torment, to count every moment, without being able to urge their speed. I count the moments myself, said she, and I have not your courage. An expression like this from her lips was enough to compensate an age of torments.

I answered her in the most ardent and affecting language that love could inspire, and was going to ask her with tremulous hesitation, to permit me to demand her in marriage from her father. She prevented me; such was the ingenuousness of her heart.

heart. Formoso, said she, the faithful Theresa and I have reflected, how much my reputation might be hurt, if the story of our interviews were to take air, and to be represented as a romantic adventure or intrigue. You love me, I believe, and so Leontio assures me. It would be cruel to make one to whom we owe so much, unhappy. My father, had it not been for you, would have lost his only son, the sole heir of his name and family. I know your birth: I am told also, (although to me this is a matter of less concern) that your fortune corresponds to it. Avail yourself of these advantages: And may I be proud in the eyes of the world as I shall be secretly happy to love as my husband, my noble and valiant knight.

Overjoyed, transported by her kindness, I promised to speak to her father without delay, since she had encouraged me; and thus ended the blissful interview.

Leontio informed me, what persons his father was most accessible to, and who had the greatest influence with him. Many of them were my own relations. I engaged them to speak in my behalf.

The Marquis heard their proposals coldly, but politely. He praised me with an air of haughty condescension,

condescension, but yet with kindness. He added, that any family might be proud of my alliance; that he could not but think himself obliged by my inclination to connect myself with him; that he believed me to possess abilities and generous dispositions which might raise the name of my ancestors to new honours; but, that the establishment of his daughter was a matter of such importance as to require the most mature deliberation; and he concluded with demanding time to determine.

This was not the most favourable answer that might have been given; but neither was it absolutely discouraging. From a man of the Marquis's character, it even seemed flattering; for he was far from lavish of either her praises or his esteem. At last, as he still continued to see me with his wonted kindness, Leontio and I persuaded ourselves that his only reason for asking the delay, had been that he might quit himself handsomely of the other engagement; and Valeria and Theresa were of the same opinion as we, although not so confident in it. Our intercourse therefore became daily more frequent and familiar. By appearing before the window, I might have given room for scandal; and Theresa having for this reason forbidden her young mistress to encourage visits there, thought it more prudent



prudent that we should meet where we might not be exposed to the malicious observations of passengers. This was another step towards the precipice.

I had the liberty of visiting my friend: the garden was open to us: and no person in the house could see us on our walks. The pavilion stood at one end of the garden; and Valeria with her companion, could follow us thither by a different way. Even if we had happened to be seen together, the presence of my friend, and the watchful fidelity of Theresa seemed to remove all appearance of mystery. Thus was I enticed onward from one snare to another by my unhappy destiny.

Nothing could be more innocent than our sweet conversations in that retired pavilion. Even the gaiety of Leontio respected the bashful modesty of the meeting. My love wore the air of devotion; Valeria's tenderness never for a moment laid aside the veil of pure and simple friendship; my looks were no less timid than my language: her eyes were never raised towards me, unless to thank me for my prayers to heaven to make her happy as she was beautiful. But, to whom should the care of her happiness be intrusted? To me? I ventured to hope so. Leontio was more confident. The expressions,

pressions, *esteem* and *kindness*, which his father had used in speaking of me; the kind reception he had always given me, both before and after I asked his daughter; the satisfaction with which he seemed to see his son cultivate my friendship;—these were all so many rays of hope, which we carefully collected into one focus, and which altogether formed a gay and bewitching illusion by which we were miserably deceived. Thus the prospect of marriage purified all our wishes, and chastened the desires, and sanctified all the vows of love.

But, in the mean time, weary of a passion which I was still obliged to restrain, and which became every day more ardent, and was the more inflamed for being confined to my own breast; I thought that I might at least complain to Valeria of the torture my heart suffered in being obliged to make such severe and long-continued efforts against itself; and I hoped to obtain a favourable hearing, if I could drop a billet into her hand, in which I might modestly express how much I suffered, while forced to wait in silent anxiety for her father's determination, without daring to solicit him.

I came, one day, melancholy, to the pavilion. Leontio urged me to tell him the reason. I replied  
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that it was impossible for me to explain myself; but that I felt a weight upon my heart, and was waiting with inexpressible uneasiness for the moment of relief. Soon after, taking advantage of the trouble and confusion with which those words had affected his sister, I ventured to give her the fatal billet.

I am sinking under my griefs, said I in it, and my heart can confide them to none but you. Console, encourage me; be my counsel and my guide. And, while I strove to describe to her the torments of the uncertainty in which I was left by her father's long silence, I avowed, that, of all the ills to which my life might be exposed, the only one which I had neither courage to look forward to, nor strength to bear, was, the refusal of her hand.

Maid too generous and tender, alas! I afterwards learned, that she had watered those words with her tears. O God! said she, he saved my brother; he is now in greater danger himself; and if my father refuses or delays to calm his sorrows and anxieties, he must be abandoned to despair. Let me interpose to relieve him. She deigned to answer me: and her answer was ingenuous, tender, and sensible, like herself.

Be not too urgent, said she, in the end of her letter. My father is arbitrary in his temper, and your impatience might offend him. Leave him to determine upon your fate and mine. Imitate the respectful silence of his daughter; imitate also her fortitude; and maintain that constancy which your device promises, and which is equally honourable to love, whether it be successful or unfortunate.

I replied with transports of extravagant joy, and protestations of devoted attachment, and implicit obedience to her will. But by trusting to her the care of my conduct, I established a secret connexion between us, that fatal intimacy which is the most dangerous snare that love can lay.

On her side were reason, goodness of heart, all the simple virtues of nature, and all the charms of innocence; on mine, the most passionate sentiments, the most lively anxieties, the most impatient desires, all that can spring up in a glowing imagination and a heart inflamed. Such were those letters which our conscious hands alternately delivered and received, without the privity of those who were with us. You will naturally conceive that the impassioned ardour of my billets would insensibly penetrate the

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soul of Valeria, and that she would sometimes partake of my delirium.

While I was thus persuaded that she loved me with ingenuous tenderness, and she, that I loved her with the most sacred, and at the same time the most violent passion, we were already so pleased, so ravished with our mutual hopes, that we would, neither of us, have changed our condition for any other in the world: we could be happier only than we ourselves then were. But, this illusion of enchantment soon vanished.

I saw Leontio approach me, one day, with trouble and uneasiness in his countenance. My friend, said he, I know not what sudden distress has befallen my sister. I have just left her extremely melancholy. Therefa and I have both vainly urged her to open her heart to us. She maintains an obstinate silence; and says that she will disclose her mind to you only. My father is just gone out: the horses were yoked in the carriage: we shall be at liberty, therefore; come, and see her.

When we arrived, Valeria and her attendant were in the garden. She made a sign with her hand, to her brother, to conduct me to the pavilion, and soon

soon after entered it herself, with Theresa. Leave me, said she, with a cold, calm, and gloomy air, leave me alone with Don Maurice. I have a secret to reveal to him which none but he must yet know.

When we were left without witnesses. You have promised, said she, obedience to my will. The time is come when the sincerity of your professions must be put to the trial. I have two painful efforts to require of you. But, before I explain myself farther, you must swear by every sacred name, to obey me.

I understand you, said I, I am to live, yet see you no more. You cannot be mine. You are to be given to another: and you would have me, cruel creature! to survive the loss of you. No, I will not swear to this.

Her heart was then cruelly torn, and tears streamed from her eyes. Formoso, said she, it is too true. My father has pronounced my doom. Ferdinand d'Ovandes will be here to-morrow. Within eight days, I shall be his bride. I wished to tell you my misfortune, and to bid you a last farewell. I feared, that if my brother had told you the fatal news, you might have been driven to some rash act of despair.

spair. Alas ! that life which I should have rejoiced to make happy, can no more be mine ; but it will be ever dear to me ; and remember, Formoso, that if you take away your own life, you take away mine by the same act : you pierce two hearts at once. My misfortune I may survive, since duty condemns me to it ; but your death I could not survive.

I listened with silent sorrow, and neither sighed nor wept. Her heart was contracted, my eyes were dry ; the flame within me exhausted the source of my tears, and burnt up my blood.

It is done then, said I, in a sobbing voice, you become the wife of Ovandes ! He is preferred to me ! Ovandes shall be your husband. You have never loved me, you love me not, you have deceived me, Valeria !—I deceive you ! said she, can you cruelly plunge the dagger deeper in my heart, with which it is already wounded. Am I at liberty to dispose of myself ?—If you deceive not me, then, replied I, you deceive.—Inhuman man, said she, load me with abuse, make me base and guilty in my own eyes ; you may ; my foolish love has given you this advantage over me ; but I shall live long enough to expiate my weakness by my sufferings. To obey my father is the first of my duties, Heaven will do

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the rest. Yes, heaven will, I hope, give me strength  
 ———To forget me.—It must be so!—You forget  
 me! cried I; and at these words, I drew my sword  
 to pierce my heart. Trembling, wild, and desperate,  
 she threw herself before me, turned away the  
 point of the weapon from my breast, and fell into  
 my arms, crying out mercy! pity!

Ah! what a sudden revolution now took place  
 in our breasts! Imagine that you behold us in all  
 the disorder of extreme sorrow, her bosom heaving  
 against mine; her face all wet with tears, leaning  
 upon my cheek; our lips meeting, and our sighs  
 and tears mingled together. Ah! sorrow, fear,  
 despair, what say I? respect, modesty, then expired  
 all together. I throw a veil over my crime.

That momentary crime of which remembrance  
 still renews the punishment, for which my tears shall  
 never cease to flow, seemed to have altered the  
 character of Valeria: and to her natural timidity, an  
 astonishing degree of resolution suddenly succeeded.

Formoso, said she, when we were somewhat recovered  
 from our disorder, I am your's, and will be  
 your's alone. Ah! your father, said I, your inflexible  
 father, the haughtiest, the most absolute,



the most arbitrary of men will prevail with his threats over your present resolution.—My father never can obtain what is impossible. He can never force me from your arms to the arms of another. So saying, she wounded her hand slightly, and with her own blood signed a solemn engagement never to acknowledge any other husband than Don Maurice Formoso. (It is there, said he, shewing me his bracelet; it is there, that sacred pledge of my love.) I, in the same manner signed with my own blood, alas! a vain engagement to live and die the husband of Valeria de Velamara. After this act, our fears and distresses were composed into a deceitful calm, and I returned to Leontio.

My friend, said I, your fears were but too well founded; you had but too good information. Your sister's marriage with Ovandes is determined upon. He will soon be here; the Marquis, your father, has given notice to his daughter, that her lover is on his way hither. This is the mortal stroke which I must now strive to parry.

I am as much distressed by it as you, replied Leontio coldly. You know with what joy I should have preferred you for my brother-in-law. But, my father's will is an invariable law to us. What  
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can we do? It is a misfortune, but a misfortune which admits of no remedy; when my father speaks, we must obey. Besides, the husband whom he has chosen for my sister is a very proper match. Ferdinand is of a noble family, possesses an immense fortune, has a handsome figure, and is eminently brave. My sister might have been happy with you, I believe; but, with him, I hope she will be still happier. These words were so many daggers to my heart.—

I fear, she will not, said I. Consult her yourself; and if she is averse to this marriage, in the name of nature, in the name of friendship, dear Leontio, try all possible means to dissuade your father from it. This language seemed to give him offence.

My sister, answered he, is of noble birth; and, not to offend you, I cannot help hoping better things than you seem to augur of her heart and understanding. But, although she should be as averse from this marriage of her father's choice, as you would insinuate, he is not a man, believe me, who may be prevailed with, to change his resolution. His word is irrevocable. When he has pledged his honour, no power on earth will make him draw back. For Valeria nothing, therefore, remains, but

but obedience; and for you, since I must tell you so, nought but absence and change of place. I myself have been imprudent, in presuming too far upon slight hopes in your favour. But, it is not yet too late to remedy the evil which my thoughtless complaisance has occasioned. For your own sake, and for the sake of my sister, I must here insist, that you see her no more, but break off all intercourse with her.

Nothing, to be sure, could be more reasonable. But, can the madness of love endure to receive laws? I did not expect, answered I, to find friendship so cold in the heart of Leontio. He is but little affected, I see, with the distresses of his friend; he can very easily bear to see me miserable. I thank him for his advice: and as to his prohibitions, I know not what right he has to impose them. As he was about to answer in an angry, threatening tone, I went away, without waiting to hear him.

Next day, I learned that Ovandes was arrived, and that the gate of the palace of Velamara was shut against me; a precaution which the Marquis might have found ineffectual, but which his son had, no doubt, taken for him.

I learned,

I learned, also, by a billet from Theresa, that Leontio had complained to Valeria of my audacious answer. Valeria had gently spoken in my justification, with considerable courage. But, all her courage forsook her, when she was obliged to endure an interview with her new lover; she was taken with an inflammatory fever, which, after three days illness appearing to be dangerous, she sent for an holy ecclesiastic, and confided her griefs to him. My father, said she, after making her confession, I have been weak; but never, never can I be false and perfidious. Although I reflect upon my fault with bitter regret, the cause to which it was owing still subsists unextinguished in my heart. To pass out of the arms of one of these men into the arms of the other, would be, to betray them both. While my heart is still filled with the dear idea of my former lover, can I be so base as to accept another. Persuade my father either to kill me or send me to a convent.

That wise and virtuous man had heard enough to make him fear a misfortune which Valeria's innocence did not foresee. He made so good an use of the influence which his character gave him, that Velamara, either to allow his daughter time for the recovery of her health, or to avoid a quarrel with the

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the worthy confessor, yielded to his solicitations, and consented to delay the marriage.

My rival was however hurt at the coldness with which he had been received. Not that he was in love; but, pride is not less jealous than love. I was the person he blamed for the injury which he supposed, he suffered. And, on me he determined to avenge himself. How could he learn, that I stood in the way of his success? Could Leontio have been so imprudent as to tell him? I suspected as much, but perhaps unjustly. However it might be, certain it is, that I had lost Leontio's friendship: and in a fit of passion, he went even so far as to second the resentment of Ovandes.

More than a month was now expired, and yet the Marquis of Velamara had taken no resolution with respect to the fate of his daughter. She had persisted in her humble request, to be sent to a convent: and you know what influence sentiments of religion have among us. When a daughter declares, that she feels an inward call from God, paternal authority can rarely oppose the heavenly impulse. Velamara firmly opposed his daughter's desire, but durst put no constraint upon her. All was therefore in suspense, when Theresa herself, wrapped

wrapped in a cloak, came to me one night, with all the terror of a criminal just escaped from justice, visible in her countenance.

Maurice, said she, it is now too late for my unhappy Mistress to retire to a convent. Come, and see her, she is in despair, and at the risk of being utterly undone, awaits you in the garden. We have formed a ladder of ropes upon which you may scale the wall.

I repaired to the place appointed, under the concealment of the night, which was between dark and clear, I found Valeria in the deepest distress. My friend, said she, to-morrow-night, we must make our escape. It is now my only hope. Be here to-morrow-night, by the same hour. It is no longer my life, but the life of your child we are to provide for,

Ah! Sir, you have been in love? resumed Maurice, addressing himself to me.—Yes, I know what love is.—Were you ever a father?—Alas! I never was.—I cannot then explain to you what I felt at hearing her mention, *the life of your child*. All that is most animated and tender in what nature and love can inspire,—did I say, to soothe and encourage her whom I now regarded as my wife, When I left her,

her, I promised to be ready next night by the same hour, before the pavilion, with a post-chaise and two horses fleetier than the wind.

Cadiz, a ship, and France were to place us in security. Deceitful hope! that security to which I fondly looked forward was far, far distant.

As I was going away, whether it were, that Leontio had been watching his sister, or that Ovan-des had observed and followed me, hardly had I proceeded an hundred paces beyond the garden-wall, when by the faint light of the new moon, I saw two men waiting for me. That instant, one of the two advanced against me, threw down his cloak, and without saying a word, attacked me, sword in hand. I defended myself: he stood not on his guard; but was soon wounded, and, as he fell, cried, Ah! traitor! I thought the voice was Leontio's: and you may easily conceive, what agony I felt. The other came now upon me; and from the fury with which he attacked me, I saw that he was my rival. He rushed upon me, while my head was down, pressed me hard, and wounded me in the sword-arm. Becoming furious in my turn, I plunged my weapon into his breast, and he fell and lay wallowing in his blood. I ran back to the pavilion,

to persuade Valeria to come down and escape with me, that very night. But she was gone; the ladder was removed, and the windows were shut. I called; but no voice answered.

Bloody, in confusion, and, if that be possible, an innocent homicide,—I now turned back. The horror which I felt at finding two bodies both fallen by my sword, stopped me, and made me take a different way. Only, that the wounded might not die without receiving assistance, I sent two of the common people to the place where I said, I had heard a noise.

I spent the night in agony. Being now an involuntary murderer, and obliged to become a ravisher, I saw myself by a series of crimes, all unintentional, exposed to the rage of two powerful families: I beheld before me fetters, disgrace, the scaffold, and, which was still more horrible, the dishonour, shame, and despair of her, who, but for me, had been adored in her country, and whose days had been all one bright sunshine of glory and happiness. What a dreadful destiny! What accumulated misery!

By day-break, I sent Francisco, my most confidential valet, to hear what was said in Seville about



my last night's adventure. Nothing was talked of, but a rencounter by night, in which Ferdinand Qvandes had been left dead on the spot, and Leontio de Velamara dangerously wounded. By whom? or for what cause? This nobody knew, and for the whole day no mention was made of me.

You will readily conceive in what anxious uneasiness I passed the day, making preparations for taking my flight as soon as night and the hour appointed for my appearance at the pavilion, should arrive: I repaired to the place. The hour elapsed, but no Valeria appeared. I was struck with terror, but I however encouraged myself as well as I could, stood still, restrained my breathing, and listened. But no voice or sound could I hear. The hours passed on, and still all was silent. My horses neighed, pawed the ground, and seemed no less impatient than myself. I waited thus till day-break, but the pavilion opened not.

Nothing could be more dangerous than for me to return to Seville. I did return, however; for I could not prevail with myself to begone, without Valeria. Francisco was sent out to discover, if possible, what was doing in the palace of Velamara. But, in vain. Gloomy and impenetrable silence reigned in the palace.

lace. The servants were all in consternation; and the fear with which they were impressed by the full and threatening sorrow of their master, had even rendered them wild and furly to all who approached. It might have been said, that Velamara was served by mutes. No information was therefore to be obtained.

On the following night I repaired in like manner as before, to the pavilion. But, my expectation was still fruitless. Thus rendered desperate, I suffered some maddening notions to arise in my mind, of attempting by violence what was impossible. But, in the mean time, the good clergyman whom Valeria had mentioned as her faithful and pious confidant, came to see me.

Formoso, said he, begone, flee, get beyond seas, remain not another night in Seville. To-morrow, you will be arrested, and ruined. Leoncio is reviving; he is yet speechless, but will not remain long so. Ah! said I, my father, heaven be praised! but if I should retire, know you what I leave behind, and in what a condition? I know; but she and her maid are shut up together in confinement; it is impossible for them to escape. Just Heaven! cried I, and would you have me then to care for my own safety!

safety ! It is her desire, her command.—Ah ! if you know all, can I leave her ?—What can you do for her, by ruining yourself ? She is carefully watched, and constantly under her father's eye.—Well ! at her father's feet will I fall in my despair.—This is what she forbids you to do. You know not the inexorable temper of Velamara. He would cause you to be dragged from his feet to the scaffold. Think with what horror he would view a man who should avow himself the murderer of his son, and the seducer of his daughter. Ah ! far from hoping either clemency or pity, dread rather the violence which he might be tempted to use against his own child ! But this is too horrible an idea. But, what I must warn you of, is that if you are seized, thrown into fetters, and condemned to death : she will instantly die, and you will be guilty of her death.—And if I leave her what must become of her, O God !—Yes, it is God you ought to implore ; to him you must have recourse ; I promise you the aid of that God who is every where present, and ever ready to succour those who call upon him. My hope, continued he, is to place Valeria in security, in a cloister. I will take care that she be secretly delivered there. But, to this end, time must be allowed to soothe the first transports of grief in her father's heart.

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Shall I not at least know from you, from time to time, said I, what is her situation, what you do for her, and whether I may not come to her assistance? You shall, depend upon me, said that charitable man; I will be faithful, I promise you by all that is sacred. Adieu, then, father, said I, weeping and embracing him; I intrust her to you; forsake her not. You shall know the place of my retreat.

Francisco's advice was, that I should make haste to Cadiz, before the report of my duels could reach that city, and should go on board the first vessel I saw ready to sail; and this would have been the wisest part for me to act. But, how could I leave those shores, without knowing what was become of Valeria! To let the wide ocean divide me from her; this was what I could not resolve upon, had I been to die a thousand deaths. Well then, said Francisco, let us strike towards the mountains of Grenada, in a direction by which we may travel through by paths into Murcia. I was born there. My father still lives there. He will afford you a retreat in which you may be safe. There you will at least be sure of not being betrayed.

I followed this advice, and retiring to the house of the old man, sent Francisco to wait upon the



good clergyman, Valeria's confessor. But, he was now no longer admitted into the palace of Velamara. Whether it were, that his correspondence with me had begun to be suspected, or that he had been supposed to confirm Valeria officiously in her intention of retiring to a convent, he had been discharged from visiting her. All that I learned from him, therefore, was that he had in vain insisted upon being permitted to see her again.

Francisco brought me this answer from the priest, with information at the same time, that a criminal process was commenced against me, and prosecuted with the utmost keenness. Velamara, or Leontio were not named: regard to the honour of Valeria had imposed silence upon them. But, the implacable Ovandes, father to Ferdinand, rendered absolutely desperate by the death of his son, called for vengeance with the wildest transports of fury. I know not what witnesses were found to depose against me, — perhaps those men whom I had sent to the assistance of the wounded; but, my flight so far corroborated their evidence as to satisfy the judges of my guilt. I was condemned to death, and my goods were confiscated.

Ah! heaven knows that this was not the severest stroke to me! But what could I think, when, after another month, Francisco came to tell me what he had learned from our good confessor! No, my friend, said he, you must expect nothing farther from my zeal. Concerning my penitent, I have nothing to communicate to you, but the saddest suspicions. What I am certain of, is, that she is not in the palace of Velamara, nor even in Seville; that she is in none of the convents which are known to me, and that no person knows what is become of her. Alas! where can she be? enquired Francisco, in terror and astonishment. The good priest lifted up his hands, drooped his head, and said: Ask her father; it is, no doubt, a secret between heaven and him.

Great God! continued Formoso, can this inhuman father, when he came to know his daughter's condition, feeling his honour deeply hurt, in the madness of indignation and grief,—can he have—  
I dare say no more. This dreadful maddening thought still haunts me in the desert. I may, then, have been the occasion of the murder of that innocent maid! the occasion of a parricide! Ah! my friend, can you now say, that this mattrais for a couch, this stone for a pillow, this obscure and lonely

lonely life are austerities too severe for the guilty, proscribed wretch who has been the author of so many ills?—Such is my lot; such have been the consequences of a passion which I thought so laudable, so virtuous, till the fatal moment when I was inextricably involved, as it were, in the meshes of guilt.

Francisco, upon his father's death, left Seville, where he could no longer hope to be of service to me, and returned hither. With his assistance I reared this cottage. He lives in his original condition, in a neighbouring hamlet, at a small distance from me; and from time to time supplies me with necessaries for the maintenance of a life, which, alas! is too slowly wasted away by the agonies of a just and bitter repentance. Thus spoke the Recluse.

I sought to persuade him, that his misfortune might not be so great as his despondency led him to fear: that a father, by concealing his daughter might be supposed desirous equally of hiding her shame and saving her life: that it was too shocking to be imagined, that even the deepest sorrow, or the fiercest indignation could ever prompt Velamara to become the murderer of his own child; and that he not only blamed him, but likewise blamed him-

self

self unjustly, when he reflected upon the most involuntary and most pardonable weakness, as if it were the most heinous of crimes. Ah! Sir, said he, had I nothing else to blame myself for, but her shame, her tears, her sorrow, that bitterness of which she must have so largely tasted, and that wasting languor which must have hurried her to the grave,—could I be a wretch, barbarous enough to forgive myself?

I saw that only the lenient hand of time could calm a heart so grievously agitated; and only begged, that he would allow one to whom he had now confided his sorrows, to visit him from time to time, that he might at least strive to soothe and share, if he could not relieve them.

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### PART III.

I WAS born, continued the worthy Swede, with a presumptuous inclination to suppose myself capable of greater firmness than my friends, under misfortune, for which I blame, and yet forgive myself.

When I am in affliction, my soul retires within herself, and I need no comforter; but when my friend suffers, I always fancy him in need of consolation from me.

From



From the moment when Formoso opened his griefs to me, I could not be easy, if I was not with him. And, sometimes by extenuating the guilt of which he accused himself, sometimes by flattering him with faint hopes, I was continually probing the wounds in his heart, and striving to pour into them the healing balm of consolation.

One day after a violent storm, the sky had resumed its wonted serenity in that happy climate, and I went to see my solitary friend. I found him engaged with a young child, beauteous and handsome, as the God of Love. He had wrapped the infant in his cloak, but shewed it naked to me. Adonis, when nine years of age, was not so charming. All the graces and delicacy of infancy adorned the lovely foundling; it displayed the ideal perfection of the human form. I never saw any thing so divine. I viewed it with high astonishment and pleasure.

What wonder is this, Formoso? said I. Alas! answered he, it is a poor peasant's boy whom I have saved from drowning. His clothes are drying before the sun. The storm was over, but the river still swollen. This child stood on the other side with a fishing rod in his hand. I had gone out, as usual, to gather plants upon the brow of the hill.

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I observed him upon the cliff of a rock which was still wet with the rain. I saw him stoop anxiously over the water, and without thinking of his danger, follow the hook with his eyes. His foot slipped, he fell, and tumbled headlong into the river. The stream carried him down, I threw myself in, swam towards him, caught hold of him, dragged him to the shore, and as he was quite exhausted and fainting, took him up in my arms, and bore him hither. When he was revived in my bosom, he eagerly thanked me, poor child! But, he is much distressed at the loss of his line, which, he says, his mother had plaited for him of her own hair.

“Your mother is surely beautiful, my little fellow?” said I, caressing him.—Yes, Sir, said he, she is very beautiful; but pale, which I am uneasy to see; for I have heard it said, that paleness is a sign of approaching death; and if I lose her, I shall be in a piteous condition! She suckled me with her milk, and still supports me.—Amiable child!—So your father is no more?—Alas! no. I never saw my father; I lost him when I was in my cradle; I dare not speak of him, for, whenever I mention him, my mother weeps.—Yonder she is, calling and seeking for me, upon the other side. She is uneasy upon my account! She lifts up her hands to heaven.

ven. She thinks me drowned. Ah! give me my clothes, quick, that I may put them on, and go out to her.

My good friend, said Formoso, your chaise is below; be so good as carry this child to his disconsolate mother. Go, my dear child, said he, return to her; love her; and do all that you can to make her easy.

O God! had Formoso known, whose child it was, he pressed in his arms! Had he known that the mother whom he saw weeping on the other side of the river, was Valeria, his dear Valeria! Yes, my friend, it was Valeria herself. It were vain to hide this from you; you must have perceived it already.

When the boy was dressed, I carried him down the hill, shewed him to his mother, and made a signal, that as the river was not fordable at that place we must go higher up.

When her son and I were seated in my chaise, I began to talk with him, and asked his name?—Hyacinth, said he.—His mother's name?—Paulina.—His father's?—Marcel.—Had his mother any property?

property?—Alas! no, said he: she has neither field, nor meadow, nor vineyard, not even a flock of sheep. How do you live, then?—Upon what she and our good friend earn by the labour of their hands.—Your mother has a friend, then, who lives with her?—Yes, Sir, and she is a great help and comfort to my mother.—What is it they work at?—They spin wool and filk, and by way of amusement, make the prettiest things imaginable of straw and osiers. I begin now to be of some use to them, myself. I take birds with a gin; and angle for fishes in the river; and this is all I can yet do. But, when I shall be stronger, I hope to give my mother better assistance. I shall become a shepherd, a wood-cutter, a husbandman; and then, Sir, I shall support my mother in my turn.

I asked if his mother seemed to be satisfied with her condition. He replied, that she strove to appear so; but hid herself at times from him, and wept with her friend. Often, even while she was caressing him, tears would silently trickle from her eyes; sometimes, she uttered heavy sighs, as she pressed to her lips a box of straw, wrought by her own hand, and on which some words were written, said he, that I could not understand; but, she has promised that she will one day explain them to me.—



Do you remember those words? Yes, very well; *Loyalty, Love, and Constancy*.—Just heaven! cried I. He smiled at the exclamation.—A great matter to be surprized at, said he, that a boy of my age should remember three words! What would you say, if I should repeat to you the story of little Moses, that of Isaac, and that of Joseph, all of which I have by heart: and above all, that of poor little Ishmael, which my mother can never hear without weeping over me? All these, however, I know.

Every word the child spoke, continued to confirm what the mention of Formoso's device had suggested. Yet, as in the spirit of Spanish gallantry, this device was in no wise singular, or even rare, it was but an equivocal token: and, as I proceeded with my little charge, I began to consider, by what means I might best clear up this mysterious affair, and yet suffer nothing to drop from me which might betray my friend's secret. If it be she, said I to myself, I must persuade her to confide in me; and if it be not she, I must beware of letting her know any thing respecting myself.

As we proceeded up the bank of the river, in search of a ford, I saw the tender mother advancing up the opposite side, to meet us. I crossed the

the river; and when I put her son in her arms; Ah! Sir, you restore me to life. And by what accident did my son cross the river? The child then told her himself what had happened. I was almost drowned, said he, when a wild man, of a frightful aspect, but of great goodness of heart, plunged into the water, to save me, carried me out, bore me fainting to his cottage, and did all to recover me, that he could have done, if I had been his own child. It is at his desire, that this good gentleman has brought me to you. And, does he refuse me the pleasure of expressing my thanks to himself? He is somewhat averse to social intercourse, said I. Can so good a man be so? returned she. Should one refuse to see those to whom one has done so much service? I live a solitary life, as well as he; yet I should be pleased to have an opportunity of making my acknowledgements to a person who has saved my son. Good woman, said I, he shall know your wish; he will feel for your uneasiness; and he and I (for I see him often; we are both botanists); yes, he shall come with me, to see you. In the mean time, permit me to accompany you to your cottage. My chaise shall wait at the foot of the hill.

Confounded and embarrassed by my offer, she begged me to come no farther. I endeavoured by

gentle solicitation, to obtain her permission. I can hardly prevail with myself to leave my little friend, said I. This lovely boy interests me much. He was not born to live thus in the obscurity of a cottage: I will venture to foretell to him a nobler destiny. Yes, I dare venture to promise his mother, that he will, one day, be a glory and a happiness to her.

Glory was not made for us, answered she, drooping her head; I can never know other happiness than that which is to be found in peaceful solitude. —Why? said I; *Hope is the companion of courage*. At hearing these words, she started. And, know you continued I, what heaven intends your son, if he shall prove himself ready to *do all for glory, and for love*? Her emotion increased; these words seemed to work upon her mind like a magical incantation.

Sir, said she, my son inspires you with sentiments in his behalf, and you speak a language to myself, at both of which I am alike surprized. Since you insist upon accompanying me to my cottage, I must beg you to say what makes you thus overlook the humble condition in which you see me. I replied that one needed only to see her and hear her talk, in order to know that she was not at present in her natural and proper situation.

In

In Spain, replied she, the air and manners of the city and the village, differ so slightly, that those of the one may often be mistaken for those of the other. Even in misfortune, and humble circumstances, man here retains much of his native dignity. Yes, this I have observed, said I; but never so fully as at this very moment.

Indeed she received me under her humble roof with the same dignified politeness as if it had been the palace of Velamara. Not with pride, for pride is levelled by misfortune; nor yet with penitent humility; but with a simple, mild, and modest spirit which seemed to yield to misfortune, without sinking under it. It was a ray of light still shining in an eclipse.

In her little cottage, poverty wore an air of neatness. The furniture was all the simplest that might be imagined; but every thing was scrupulously kept clean. Her friend who lived with her, behaved with an air of equality which seemed to be rather assumed than natural: the respect with which she was impressed, appeared through the familiarity of her language, and the freedom of her manners. Nor did Valeria any better disguise her own superiority: I could distinguish the lady and her waiting-



maid, even by the care they took to hide the distinction. Ursula was the name of Paulina's friend. But Ursula might possibly be Theresa: and in order to be fully satisfied with respect to both, I had only to describe them to Formoso. But, it was not yet time to acquaint him with the affair; he was in danger; love might again betray and ruin him. It was wiser to persuade the mother of Hyacinth to confide to me the true state of her circumstances and character.

When we were alone, pardon, said she, the curiosity which makes me desirous of knowing who you are, and whence you come, and what adventure has brought you among these hamlets?

I replied, without seeking to feign any unreal pretext, that being an ambassador from the Court of Sweden to the Spanish Court, I had availed myself of the situation, and come to survey those beautiful provinces; and speaking of my country, among us, said I, *Loyalty, Love and Constancy* inspire all hearts. The new ray of light which my repetition of these words seemed to throw upon her situation was too much for her. Ah! Sir, said she, you repeat words which you have heard from my son!—It is true, answered I, he told me, that he had read them upon

upon a box, curiously wrought. But, he did not tell me what was in the box; and yet, I think, that I know; for, we of the north have all somewhat of a prophetic spirit in us. You amuse yourself with exciting my anxiety, replied she: I am surpris'd, that one who has so much of the appearance of a disposition to sympathize in the misfortunes of others, should take a pleasure in giving pain. Ah! may the punishment of heaven overtake me, said I, if I have ever sought to add one drop of bitterness, to swell the cup of the unfortunate. No, I am incapable of such barbarous impiety. I should respect misfortune, even although it appeared in company with guilt. How much more then, when it has fallen upon virtue and innocence! when the candour and constancy of a soft, a tender, and an ingenuous heart concur to interest me in it! Ah! cried she, this weak and tender heart is known to you; I am betrayed!—No, said I, fear not, you are not betrayed.—Well! said she, only tell me what you suppose the box to contain.—I see in it sacred characters, but I see likewise marks of blood.—O God! my secrets are all divulged.—No, Madam, they are not; they are locked under an agate, and fastened down with a lock of that fine hair.—So you know all. Ah! if he be known to you, who

made these things so secret from blood—  
 answered she, is

is the sole depository of the secret of my soul, does he know where I am? Has he sent you hither? Where is he? Is he safe?

Madam, you and I have equally secrets to communicate to one another. And I am almost sure, that our secrets are both the same. But, as your's is in your own power, and mine, for a similar reason, is not in my power; it remains with you, to explain yourself first. I should be blameable, if I were to make the first discoveries. You must prevent me.

Well! said she, trembling, what would you know? —Your name?—Valeria—and his?—Don Maurice. —Your companion is then Theresa?—The same.—Enough. Despair not of seeing him again.—Ah! has he yet escaped the severity of the laws? where have you left him? knows he the place of my retreat? —He knows nothing; he is yet a fugitive, and threatened by the arm of justice; the least indiscretion on your part might ruin both him and yourself; and I dread the indiscretions of love. Remain here, hid from the world; and let the passionate, the most faithful of lovers continue in his place of exile, without learning that you are here. While I exert myself to save and serve you both, I am  
anxious,

anxious, that you may remain safe from one another. I shall bring you together, at a proper time. But, tell me, that I may inform him, by what miracle did you escape, as well as he, from the horrors which threatened you?

You, no doubt, know, said she, in what condition he left me. If the infection of vice had, but for a moment stained the soul of Valeria, if she could only have foreseen the danger to which she should be exposed by the delirium of grief and love; she would not now dare to meet the eye of a man acquainted with her misfortune. But, in your eyes, a failing so involuntary cannot appear criminal in your eyes; at least, it is not so in mine. While I blame myself for an act of weakness for which I have suffered so much, my conscience acquits my heart of guilt. My heart amidst all its sorrows has never been stung with remorse. I blush not at the name of mother. I know with what harshness my reputation may have been treated in the world: elopement and flight are facts from which the world judges; the world may have thought me guilty, and I complain not of their severity; but, of my heart none can judge, save heaven, my lover, and myself.

I,



I, answered I, am not a man to condemn a soul, so exalted, and amiable. Before me, the mother of Hyacinth, the mistress of Formoso needs not to wear a blush of shame.

You know not, resumed she, the issue of that combat, in which, by my father's garden-wall;—Yes, I know all that passed out of the palace of Velamara, till Formoso left Seville. Well! in that palace, my brother was dying, and my father in a wild fury made vengeance his first care, and gave strict orders to find out the murderer. I had seen my brother enraged at Formoso's answer, when he forbade him to see me more, and heard him threaten to punish his insolence, if he should dare to make any attempt, in disregard of this prohibition. The hour, the place, the persons, all concurred to convince me, that Formoso was the unknown author of those unhappy events, and that he had not been the aggressor. They named him not, but spoke only of love, jealousy, and the quarrel between the two rivals; and I was suspected to have been the cause of that bloody contest. Upon this head my father thought proper to question me.

Ovandes is dead, said he, in a tone of the sharpest severity; your brother is wounded, perhaps mortally.

mortally. You know the hand which has done these mischiefs, daughter, and you must confess all. I acknowledged all that was innocent in my conduct, concealing only my love and my frailty. He named Formoso; I shewed astonishment at the thought of a quarrel between such intimate friends, as my brother and Formoso. Ah! replied he, you perhaps know too well the cause of their quarrel! But, tremble for what may be the consequence if I shall come to the knowledge of this. These dreadful words he accompanied with a look still more terrifying, and left me with a beating heart.

All the night, methought, I saw my lover before me, loaded with irons, condemned to death, and led forth to execution. I sent to conjure him, as you may have heard, to think no more of me, but provide by flight for his own safety. He at last obeyed; and no sooner was he gone, than my heart revived, and I was pleased, as if at liberty, although strictly confined to my apartment, and vigilantly watched.

I was kept in this confinement, as long as my brother continued dangerously ill, and too weak to speak so as to make himself understood. But, as soon as he was able, he gave my father a just and noble

noble testimony of the honour of Formoso, and answered in the amplest manner for my innocence. He was permitted to see me; and from that time, my confinement was less strict, and the treatment I received not so harsh as before: I had even liberty, sometimes, to take the air in the garden. But, what a multitude of anxieties disquieted my heart, all this time! Within seven months I was likely to become a mother. But, this was not the hardest circumstance in my lot. Formoso was going to be tried.

I seized a moment when I happened to be left alone by my brother's bed-side, and asked whether the criminal process was still urged on, against Don Maurice. I would not suffer it to be carried on in my father's name, said he; and he has himself desisted from the prosecution; to avoid giving rise to reports injurious to your reputation, he would not suffer your brother's name to be mentioned in the indictment. Nothing was held out but the rencounter between Ferdinand and Don Maurice, and that without mentioning the cause. But, the Duke of Ovandes, in his despair for the death of his son, demands vengeance on the murderer, and exerts all his credit to obtain it. He has cited as witnesses, persons to whom Formoso had confessed his guilt; and as the flight of the accused adds weight to the accusation,

accusation, there is every reason to fear that he will be condemned.

And, will you suffer the innocent to be condemned! said I. Will not you raise your voice to declare, that Don Ferdinand, and yourself forced Formoso to draw in his own defence.—Sister, replied Leontio, if I were to avow this truth, I should be obliged, at the same time, to divulge another, still more painful. When you urge me to accuse myself by declaring, that I am the aggressor, you should consider upon what terms I might justify myself. Be satisfied with seeing me at the gates of death: ask me not to dishonour you and your family. Respect, dread a father who will not tamely suffer your amours to disgrace him. Ah! Sir, if my testimony could have served, this threat had been vain. But, what could I have said to save my lover? Can you conceive a situation more dreadful and distressing than mine? The sentence pronounced against Formoso was communicated to me. I became pale at hearing it; my blood was chilled in my veins. My father was present, and, no doubt, observed me. However, as he could not but feel some remorse, himself, for the guilty silence of Leontio, he took no notice of my uneasiness, but, only determined to separate me for ever, from a



man whose hand, he said, he saw still reeking with his blood.

I begged leave to retire to a convent; and my request was granted. But, the convent I was to retire to, was, above all others, one in which I was likely to be guarded with the utmost strictness and vigilance. How could I there bring forth the unfortunate progeny of my weakness? Could I flatter myself with the hope, that my shame might be concealed there? Or had I not rather reason to fear that, in order to conceal the disgrace of its birth, my child would be torn from the fondness of its mother.

—Ah! I still tremble to think of the impression which the fear of this made upon my heart.

I had now only to chuse whether I would throw myself upon my father's mercy, and confess all to him, at the risk of my own life, and the life of the poor, innocent infant which I thought, I felt quick within me; or would rather escape from his fury, and by my flight save him the pain of long and bitter remorse. I knew the passionate violence of his temper; and, more upon his account, than for my own sake, dreaded, that in his first transports of rage, he might be hurried into some rash and fatal deed.

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Theresa, said I to my companion, I must try to escape, at whatever risk. Wilt thou forsake me? The good girl wept, and swore that nothing should part us. She then contrived means, to enable us to effect our escape.

Her eldest brother, Paul Lucious was a waterman upon the river. Him we gained to our interests. We went out at the window of the pavilion, by a ladder of ropes which we had provided. Towards midnight, we repaired to the place where Paul was waiting for us, in his boat. He promised, as we sailed down the river, that we should be received at its mouth, at a place called St Lucar, by a pilot who was his friend, and would entertain us, till he could procure us a passage on board the first ship bound from Cadiz to Carthagen, to the last of which places I had said, that I wished to go.

We were both disguised in the dress of ordinary women: and the obliging pilot described us as two nieces of his who were returning to their friends in Grenada.

Are you not surprised, my friend, said the Count, in this part of his story, that the lovers should have

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been

been thus directed, as if by some friendly angel, to seek refuge, so nearly in the same spot?

As we drew near to Carthagera, continued Vateria, we reflected that two fugitives, such as we, might, in that city, be taken notice of, and that it were better to seek a place of security in some neighbouring village. As the vessel moved along the coast, we observed at the bottom a delightful vale, and a small village close upon the shore. We would land here, said Theresa to the shipmaster: and he, with all the complaisance of a gallant Spaniard, immediately put out his boat, and conducted us to the shore.

There we began to think ourselves more secure from pursuit, and thanked heaven for our deliverance. But, fear which thinks that it can never take enough of precautions, made us avoid the village. We struck off towards the adjacent hills, hoping to find among them some sequestered, solitary spot, unknown to all the world, where we might live secure. By the favour of heaven we found this cottage.

I shall not trouble you, said she, with a detail of the anxieties we felt. Conceive to yourself two

doves

doves flying amidst vultures, and you have some faint idea of our trepidation and solicitude. Habit insensibly fortified our timidity. Other cares than those of my preservation soon came to divide my heart. I was now a mother: and my son hanging at my breast inspired me with that courage which natural affection communicates even to the most timorous of birds, for the protection and defence of the young under their wings. No, there was no danger which I would not have braved in protecting my son: and if I had been present, when he fell into the river, I should have plunged in, after him; I should indeed have plunged into it, if I had not found him, after searching the hill and the vale. Judge, then Sir, what gratitude I feel for the kindness with which you have restored him to me: conceive how ardently I bless and revere the hermit who saved him from the waters at the risk of his own life.

Madam, said I, after so much anxiety and alarm, you may assure yourself, that some deity takes pleasure to behold the constancy with which you bear misfortune. I am persuaded, that you will yet be happy. I hope, that I am chosen to contribute to the accomplishment of this happy purpose. Remain you here, in your solitary obscurity, and confide in



my care. Your lover shall know all, and you shall soon be re-united.

I now returned to Formoso, but was careful to drop no hint even, that could tempt him to cross the valley. Only I told him, that the good woman had received her son, with a thousand grateful prayers to heaven for him who had saved his life. Her prayers, added I, will surely be answered; for heaven seldom fails to hear the prayers of gratitude. I must now leave you for some time, my friend, an unforeseen and urgent affair calls me to Seville; but I have not yet travelled through either Murcia or Valentia; and I hope, therefore that I shall soon be with you again.

At Seville, said Formoso, you may perhaps meet with the good father of whom I have spoken to you. He is called father Athanasius. See him; and without telling him where I am, let him know, that I still live, and have not forgotten his kindness. Above all, enquire, if he can yet give me any information concerning the fate of Valeria.

Wonderful is the concatenation of the events of human fate! All the pains I had intended to take, and the measures I had concerted to employ at Se-

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ville, and at Madrid, in behalf of our two lovers; the whole plan which I had marked out for my conduct; the means by which I purposed to soften the implacable enemies of Formoso,—all were cut short by these words; Go, see father Athanasius.

Ah! what joy! what comfort you bring me! said the good old man, when he heard me pronounce the name of Maurice! Why cannot I also learn whether Valeria be yet in the world! But, alas, no she is no more! I assured him, that she was still alive. Merciful God! I adore thy goodness! said he in a transport. I shall then have the happiness to see them united, before I die.—What is it you say, father?—I say, that these two hearts by whose mutual tenderness I have been so much interested in their behalf, shall, at last obtain the reward of their constancy. I have already procured the family of Velamara, to solicit the revocation of the sentence against Formoso; and Leontio has declared himself the aggressor. Alas! the unhappy Leontio has long been tortured with remorse for having withheld his testimony in behalf of innocence:—and his father, now bending towards the grave, blames himself for having enjoined his son to maintain upon that occasion, a guilty silence. They both accuse themselves for driving Valeria to despair,



It is I who am guilty, said Leontio, in full greater agony; I took a foolish and inhuman pleasure in kindling in the breast of my friend and my sister, the love which has undone them. I favoured its progress, and was even diverted to observe it: I was their confident, and, without my father's knowledge, but in hopes that he might consent to their marriage, complaisantly encouraged their growing fondness for each other. But, soon after, when a richer and more splendid match offered, I coldly rejected my friend whom I should have soothed and pitied. He was hurt at my cold indifference; and expressed what he felt with a degree of warmth by which I was offended. In consequence of this, I took part with his rival, who being enraged to find himself slighted by my sister, sought an opportunity of revenge upon the cause. At last, I who had met him as the second of Ferdinand, who had been myself the aggressor, who was conscious of Formoso's innocence,—I suffered him to be condemned, proscribed, and deprived of his property: I have given a mortal wound to the heart of her who, but for me, had never known him, and who loved him only as the generous man whose valour had saved my life. Where shall we find them? Where are they? Must I die before I can repair the wrongs I have



have done them? Such was the narrative of Athanasius.

O my friend! I saw at this moment, of what importance it is to man, to be convinced that there is on high, an invifible witness of his actions, who will, one day, be his judge.

Go, said I to the good old man, go, tell them there is a man in Seville who brings consolation to their sorrows. I am the Count de Creutz, the Swedish ambaffador to the Spanish Court. I know where Maurice Formoso is; and I know equally the place of Valeria's concealment. Tell them so.

You will naturally fuppofe, that they asked to fee me immediately. But, I prevented their wifhes. Never faw I two faces bear a deeper impreffion of the affliction produced by remorse.

Is it true, Sir? asked the old Marquis of Velamara. Is my daughter ftill alive? I affured him, that fhe was.—She, no doubt followed the unfortunate Formoso? No, fhe knows not even the place of his retreat. Ah! Sir, cried the old man at thefe words, my daughter was innocent, then!—She is more, said I; fhe is virtuous; there is nothing under

der Heaven more respectable than Valeria in her distress. I speak not of Formoso; the greatness and generosity of his mind are already known to you. Misfortunes have only served to exalt his character with new virtues.

Well! Sir, said Leontio, tell me where he is; and I will fall at his feet, if he is not yet so generous as to receive me in his arms.

Gentlemen, said I, let the sentence pronounced upon him first be annulled: the duke of Ovandes must be brought to consent——Ovandes lives not to oppose it, said Velamara. And he even forgave him on his death-bed.

Thus I saw the storm which had lowered over the fortune of Formoso dispelled, in a manner, by a single blast. The sentence against him was annulled; his confiscated estate was restored. The honour of the name of Formoso was fully cleared. All that now remained, was to recommend Hyacinth to their kindness. But this was not my business. I left to nature, an advocate, much more skilful and eloquent than I, the care of soliciting for him.

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As soon as the act of abrogation was put into my hands, I asked only time to bring back Valeria and Formoso, and went instantly to find them.

Here, my friend, you undoubtedly expect an interesting *recognition*; and indeed, with my solitary botanist on the one hand, and my good spinster with young Hyacinth, on the other, I might easily have produced a fine theatrical incident. But, it would have been cruel to expose two minds, so much worn out with anxiety and sorrow to the overpowering agitation of such a sudden gush of joy. Comfort, and peace were what they both wanted most, after so many sufferings.

Instead of preparing for a new scene of mutual astonishment, between them, at their meeting, I took pains to soften at least to the tender hearted Valeria, the force of a stroke which she might have proved unable to bear. I had, at first, encouraged her to hope; by the time of my return, those hopes which I had cheered her, had almost died away. I now strove to revive them. I represented a change in her lover's fortune, first as a thing possible, and then, as not improbable. The effects of injustice, I told her, were never permanent; truth might be eclipsed for a moment, but soon burst out with redoubled

doubled lustre. In heaven, and even in the hearts, there was one armed to vindicate and avenge innocence, whose wrath could be appeased by nothing but the fullest expiation.

When these suggestions seemed to shed some rays of comfort over the darkness of her mind, I then proceeded to speak with greater confidence. I went even so far as to promise, that Leontio and her father should make reparation for the act of injustice which they had been guilty of, and that even Ovan-des would not carry his resentment down with him, to the grave. And, who knows, added I, whether heaven which has disposed these things for his advantage, may not also have preserved Formoso, at no great distance from us, to receive the benefit of one of those strange, events proceeding from natural causes, which appear miraculous only because they could not be foreseen?

Alas! Sir, said Valeria, how can you take pleasure to mock me by suggesting such vain and illusory ideas? such dreams can never make me happy. No — But, why, said I, should you suppose, that these may not be realities? What I foresee is so simple a matter, that I should scarcely be surprised, if I were to find the wild man who saved your son to be no



other than Formoso himself.—What, Sir, that wild man!—She could speak no more; so strong was yet the emotion, which I had tried to extenuate.—Yes; that wild man; and why not? Why, if Formoso still lives, may he not be concealed there? All the wonder would be that the place of his retreat should have happened to be so near your's; but, there is nothing wonderful in two cottages standing near each other.—What, Sir, can this be possible? can it be true?—Undoubtedly, it is possible—it is even true.—Good God! Just God! my son! my son! cried she in wild agitation.—Come! thy father lives; thou hast seen him, Sir! pardon me; but I tremble, I dare not yet—Is it true? What! this vale, only this vale between us! Does he know?—No, he knows nothing of the matter; he knows not that you are alive, that his sentence has been revoked, and his fortune restored. He knows not, that your father consents to your union. All this is true, and we must inform him of it,

With whatever caution I had made this discovery, yet had it the effects which I had foreseen upon her. Her astonishment rose higher, at every word; her hands shook; all the frail springs of a frame naturally delicate, and wasted by sorrow, received a shock: I saw her very veins throb; her eyes seem-

ed to become dim; and she would have sunk down in a swoon, had I not revived her by saying, *Let us go see him.* At these words, she suddenly recovered strength, took her son by the hand, and cried, *Let us go see him.* The mother, the son, and I went down the hill, and crossing the river in my carriage, soon reached the opposite side of the vale.

He was gone out to botanize. Valeria and her son were almost breathless with anxiety. Here, said I, is his habitation. Rest here, till I call him in.

Ah! you who accuse me of exaggerating whatever I attempt to describe, teach me how to express the overpowering emotions of tenderness, or rather the delirium of love and compassion with which Valeria was affected when she saw in how poor and humble a condition her lover had been reduced to live, for nine whole years. This turf-built cot, this fern-covered roof, this mat, and that cold stone on which he has laid his head!—There it was, he groaned, and despaired of ever seeing me more. She kneeled down, and wept over his bed. Her child strove to comfort her, and wept with her. Ah! mother, said he, is this a time for weeping, when we are to embrace my father?

I now wandered backwards and forwards, calling on him, not by name, but only by loud cries, which were re-echoed from the mountain-fides.

He heard me, and came towards me. When I saw him approach, I advanced to meet him: Embrace and congratulate me, said I. I have succeeded in my errand to Seville. You are no longer in danger. Here is the act by which all the rights of honour and innocence are restored to you. Your fortune is restored. He took me in his arms, and pressed me to his heart. Generous friend, said he, how greatly am I indebted to you! You restore me life, liberty, honour, and even that fortune which I had forgotten. But, who shall give me back Valeria? added he, in a tone of the deepest sorrow. Who shall restore her?—I, answered I.—You, my friend!—If I cannot, what avails any thing I have already done for you? At hearing these words, his joy burst out. Come, said I, none of this weakness. Don Maurice, shew the same fortitude in bearing joy, which has sustained you under sorrow. I desire not that you should shew yourself insensible to the pleasure of knowing that Valeria is yet alive, is a mother, has a son as beauteous as herself; that you are immediately to see them both; that Leontio's friendship is restored to you; and that her father wishes

wishes you to become the husband of Valeria; all this must, no doubt, affect you with an agreeable surprise; but, in all situations in life, a great soul remains always master of itself.

What call you, a great soul, said he, like a man distracted. Half of these prodigies, the happiness barely of again seeing my wife and my child, if real or possible, were enough to raise my joy to the highest pitch of extravagance; I should become mad in their arms. I had better have left you your good sense, your vigour, and your courage, then, said I. Ah! my friend, torture me no longer with this uncertainty: and if heaven has wrought so many miracles for me, convince me that it is so; carry me to my wife, and my child. They are not far off, said I, we shall instantly see them. Follow me. He followed, like a man absolutely distracted, and out of himself.

O God! what an interview! I had done, you see, what was possible to calm the emotions of joy and surprise upon both sides. Yet, I feared that I should see them both expire, when Formoso entering his cottage, saw Valeria kneeling on his mat, kissing it, and weeping over it: and when she, at the piercing



cry which he uttered, turned suddenly about, and lifted up her eyes upon him.

She became insensible. The tears, cries, kisses, and caresses of Hyacinth brought her to life and sense again. I, bearing up in my arms, the brave man, who had borne and surmounted so much, yet was ready to die of joy, did all I could to save his life. The tide was too strong for him; he scarcely breathed; and his breathing was interrupted by heavy sobbings. At last, tears of love, of blissful happy love, opened a passage for themselves, and he wept over the mat. It was a quarter of an hour, before either could speak. I shall try to repeat their words. They repeated each other's names, the name of the child, my name, and uttered some ardent expressions of gratitude and love to heaven, and to that beneficent God who had taken pity upon them. Ah! believe me, this is the only eloquence of the higher passions.

I carried them back to Seville. Formoso went first with me and the pious father to embrace Leontio, and kneel before the Marquis. You have forgiven my misfortunes, said he; but this is not all, it is not enough; you must also forgive a crime, pardon a moment of delirium which has been fol-

lowed

lowed by nine years of bitterness and remorse, of solitude and suffering. Heaven itself is disarmed, and pardons me, since Valeria and my son are at length restored. O my father! O my brother! Imitate the mercy of that God who hath taken pity upon me; pardon me, like him. A word from Valeria's father, pronounced before the altar, will reconcile honour, nature, and love.

Remorse had humbled the haughtiness of the Velamara's, and extinguished their hatred and resentment. But, although they had been differently minded, the suppliant air of Don Maurice, and the affecting nature of his prayer, enforced as it was by the tone of his voice, his look, his tears, must have softened their hearts. Yet, their silence shewed the confusion of mind which they felt. But, when Valeria, with her lovely boy came in, cast herself at her father's feet, and wept before him, every emotion then gave place to the feelings of natural affection in every breast. Nature justified all; and methought I saw her enfold together in her arms the relenting father and his grateful, happy children. The vows of love were immediately sanctified before the altar.

THE

NEW MORAL TALES  
THE VILLAGE BREAKFASTS;

Or, ADVENTURES OF INNOCENCE.

FIRST BREAKFAST.

*The Window.*

I HAD for a neighbour in the country a little old woman, of an agreeable temper, and a figure which still displayed every mark of beauty. Her complexion was past its flower; her cheek no longer shewed the down of the peach, but had still the smoothness and somewhat of the vermillion of a pine-apple preserved through winter. Her features were still animated and expressive; even her eyes still sparkled; young women might have envied the alluring sweetness of her smiles. By her gaiety, her desire to please, the marks of sensibility which she discovered, and above all, by the graces of her mind and manners,—any body would have said, with Fontenelle, *that, Love had passed here.*

She had formed a little circle of friends in the village, who went, every morning to breakfast with her, sometimes in a chearful parlour, and sometimes in a green arbour, in the open air. I was one among those

those friends of her's. She had a pleasure in relating the incidents of past times, and we were not less fond to hear them.

Madam, said we to her, one day, all your little stories charm us: but we must confess, that we should hear the tale of your youth, with greater pleasure than any other. You are not wrong, replied she, for, if I chose, I have certainly wherewith to amuse you. But, I never talk of myself; for, in speaking of one's self, a person seems always to spare one's own weaknesses; and every hearer invariably detracts from the good, and aggravates the evil told.

We all assured, that we would most certainly credit whatever she said, and that every one of her words should be held literally true. What! said she, will you never be tempted to suppose something concealed in my story, and to supply from your fancy what seems wanting?—No, never.—And, will you keep the secret while I live?—Yes, while we live.—Oh, no, said she, it would be too much to require that; I may, at least allow, that when you come to my time of life, you shall, each of you relate to his friends what good Madame de Closan told you of the follies of her youth. But,

I warn



I warn you before hand, that the story is rather long, that I must pause occasionally as I proceed in it, and that it will amuse us at three or four breakfasts. So much the better, said we. She filled out our tea, and began her story.

I was born for riches, which I knew not of. My father having been an active and successful merchant, had amassed a great fortune in his port folio. I was but an infant, at the time of his death; and my mother was dead before him: and I remained, as commonly happens in such cases, at the mercy of an uncle, who was my tutor, and of an aunt, his wife, two devout folks, but covetous, and that of my property, no less than of the property of any person else. I need not tell you, that, as their avarice made them grudge themselves the necessaries of life, they were equally sparing to me.

Their first thought was, that if I were to know of my fortune too soon, this alone, in spite of all their cares, would spoil me. This was wise foresight: but their prudence went too far; and to render me more docile, and keep me more dependent they made me believe, that my parents had left nothing. Of all my mother's toys, this little golden heart was the only one they gave me. They conceal-

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ed my father's fortune with equal care. Thus was I made to suppose myself an object of compassion to those relations whose ward I was; and never was a ward more harshly dealt with.

Till I was sixteen years of age, I never saw daylight except through my window. But, at the age of sixteen, this window shewed me something dearer than light; a young and handsome notary's clerk, who before sitting down to his desk in the morning used to come to take air for a few moments, at an opposite window, having his fine fair hair, carelessly put up with a comb, but hanging mostly loose upon his shoulders.—You might suppose him Apollo in a cotton morning-gown: Such was my clerk, from the first moment, he was mine; he was so all his life; and I am now his widow. I am anticipating, but I have a reason for it.

At the first sight of him, all those confused sensations which I had begun to feel, were explained, the listlessness of my solitary life, my roving reveries, the restlessness which pursued me in my sleep. I thought, I saw what was wanting to my happiness. But, the Court which intervened, although narrow, was an abyss between us. But, our eyes were not to be restrained by it.

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His surprise, his emotion, and the rapture which he felt at the first sight of me were too strong to be concealed. Nor could he avoid perceiving the emotion with which I was at the same time affected; for it was involuntary, and I had not time to think; yet, I am sure, it was timid, at least, and mixed with that modesty which is instinctively the companion of innocence. That modesty warned me, that I ought not to remain longer at the window, opposite to a young man who seemed to gaze upon me with pleasure. I retired, and walked through the room, and did as if I were diverting myself with my birds; but still I returned towards the spot where my eye had been caught by so charming an object. I went, I came, I glided backwards and forwards like a shadow, but still as I turned, noticed with a sly glance, whether he were observing me. My young clerk stood motionless and in rapture, followed, and spoke to me with the language of his eyes, and seemed to reproach mine for not fixing themselves upon him.

At last I had the fortitude to retire out of his sight. But, the rest of the day was to me all a dream from which the talks in which I was busied, could not rouse me. I was under my aunt's eye, who seemed now to observe me more attentively,  
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and more strictly than ever. To conceal from her my confusion, I tried to read; but still his blue eyes, and fair hair swam before me. She asked an account of what I was reading, but I knew not what to say. I complained of a dimness of sight which I had been anxious to hide from her, lest I should alarm her tenderness; and God knows how tender she was!

The day seemed long, and I wished for night, that I might be left alone, and in the hope that sleep might assist and prolong my sweet reverie. This I intreated of sleep when I lay down; and the gentleness of sleep could not refuse my request.

This was in the month of April, at the period of the renewal, of the lovely return of youth which, alas! nature might grant to us, as well as to these happy vegetables! but I was also in my spring, and I awaked with the first dawn of morn; yet my young Apollo had been more alert than I. He was waiting for me at his window. At sight of him, something whispered to me, that this was our rendezvous. I was ashamed to find myself there, but concealed my embarrassment by seeming to be merely taking a look of the morning. He however caught one of my looks which was directed upon him, and saluting,



signified by his eyes and gestures, how much he was delighted. As there was no harm in that, I returned his salutation. I have since learned that, at the age of sixteen or eighteen years, when a couple are agreed upon any one point, they soon come to an understanding, as to every thing else. I was wrong therefore, I confess, in returning his salutation.

He was pleased with having engaged me in this mute dialogue, and wished to continue it. He laid his hand upon his breast, and signified what pleasure he felt in breathing the fresh air. I had again the imprudence to imitate him. He became more confident, measured with his eye the space between us, and seemed to groan and sigh with ardour. I understood him well, but chose not to imitate him; I even blamed myself for forming an acquaintance who seemed indeed to be well-born, but whose name and condition in life were both unknown to me.

For some mornings following, I kept myself close, and endeavoured to busy myself otherwise, although the object of my thoughts was still the same. By what singular circumstance in my fate had this young man come to lodge so near me!—But, ought I, for this, to deny myself the only pleasure I have in life, the innocent pleasure of breathing the morning

ning air, and enjoying the charms of this lovely season? After all, where was the danger? And, what did that young man give me to understand, at which I had reason to be alarmed? He is pleased with seeing me; and that may very well be, said I, consulting my little mirror. He perhaps wishes to see me nearer; very natural this also: I see nothing that is not kind in his regret at being at a distance from me. Should I leave him to think that I am afraid of him? To avoid him would be to shew fear, and why should I fear?—

I took courage, and next day shewed myself, with my cage in my hand which I set in the window, and seemed to busy myself in giving my birds meat and fresh water. He heard them sing, and was charmed; but viewed their cage with an attentive and jealous eye, and seemed to envy their lot. How could I see all this, at such a distance? Ah! at the age of sixteen, one's eyes are sharp in seeing what pleases! I assumed an absent, careless air; and not the slightest shade of the sentiments with which I inspired him escaped me; his anxiety, his impatience, his reproachful glances when I came too late, and his timid gratitude, when I lent attention to him;—nothing of all this escaped me. A month was thus happily passed, without either too great

boldness on his side, or too much of complaisance or vigour on mine.

At length, on the first of May, the festival of my saint, for my name is Philippina, I saw on my window, when I arose, a lovely rose the earliest of the year, I believe. That instant, he appeared to offer it with so tender an air, and so much grace, that I could not help thanking him. A little calendar which he had in his hand, and of which he respectfully kissed the leaf that bore my name, shewed that he had found means to learn that name. I was less fortunate, for I knew not his. I bowed, to shew him, that he was not wrong, but that my name was truly Philippina, and that saint Philip's day was my festival. I then saw him assume new animation, press his right hand upon his heart, and then wave it towards me, with the air of making an offering, while with his left, raised, he seemed to call heaven to witness the offering he made. I felt my own heart beat quicker than usual; my cheeks glowed; my eyes could not meet his; I covered my face with both my hands and retired. I have since wondered to think, that such mute language should speak more powerfully, and convey meaning quicker than words: for, if Clofan had spoken to me, he would hardly have dared to pass  
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from the praise of my beauty to a confession of the impression it had made upon him so very immediately; and I had been warned never to lend an ear to the flattering language of men. But, how could flattery or falsehood be suspected in the expression of the countenance? How should it be supposed that tender and suppliant eyes can deceive? The tongue it is that deceives; but we were silent.

It was very clear, however, that he had given me his heart, and pledged his faith to me; and if I continued to see him, I should also pledge mine. Alone, at my age, without the consent, without the knowledge even of my relations, thus to hold an interview with a young stranger who perhaps sported with my innocence! All this gave me uneasiness; and I almost resolved to shut my window. A very wise reflexion occurred to divert me from the resolution. I have accepted nothing but his nosegay, said I to myself; as to his other presents, I have not, indeed refused, but neither have I accepted them. And why should I refuse them, if they are not unworthy of me? Heaven perhaps destines him for my husband. If he be made for me, let me allow him hopes of obtaining me, and time to demand me from my friends. He knows surely upon whom I depend. Let me maintain a degree



of reserve with him; yet, if I appear amiable in his eyes, why should I complain of that. Alas! I have much need to please. Who would marry so poor a girl, if not in love with her. Thus did love encourage me. Ah! how dangerous love, when he pretends to reason!

Having laid down this wise plan for my conduct, I continued to see him, without farther distrust either of him, or of myself. His first care, every morning, when he awaked, was to water my nosegay. He exhaled its fragrance; he counted the roses which were full blown, and called me to remark those which were only half-open, and the buds which were just beginning to blossom. He fixed his eyes upon them with an air of fondness; and I smiled to see him take, every day, so much pains about them: and each day, without being sensible of it myself, I turned my eyes more frequently, more freely, and more confidently to meet his. One day, I was forgetting to turn them from him, and I know not what sudden emotion they occasioned him to feel; but he put his lips to one of my roses, and blew towards me, the kiss he had given it. You may well think that I was not to leave this piece of audacity unpunished, I instantly retired, and determined not to appear again for the  
next

next eight days. Eight days! ah! my friends, was not this an effort of courage!

I must tell you all. Although I hid myself from his sight, I could still see him; I observed him from behind the window-curtain which I sometimes kept half-open. On the two first days, I saw him water the rose-bush, as usual, with a mournful languid air, while it seemed to sympathize in his melancholy. After looking long upon it, and turning his eyes an hundred times in vain towards my inexorable window, he went away, at last, like a rejected suppliant. But, on the third day, the poor culprit sank under his punishment; he watered the rose-bush with his tears, tore away the rose on which he had impressed his lips, with the offending kiss, shut the window; and I saw him no more.

After two days, a man in black appeared in his place, with a cane in his hand, and walking up and down in the chamber. Ah! said I to myself, this is a physician; he is ill, and I am the cause! I was now afflicted, and hateful to myself, and blamed my own cruelty and injustice. How should I remedy the evil which I had done? How acquaint him, that I was sensible of it? I found out a way.

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The man in black came back twice, that day. I watched the moment when he was at the window, and with an air of affliction, bowed to him. He returned my bow, without knowing who I was; and I saw him return to his patient, to ask. This was all I desired.

The young man did not satisfy him; but no sooner was he left alone, than he arose, and came to see me himself. His features were pale and altered. I believe, I expressed my uneasiness rather too strongly. He told me of his illness by putting his hand to his pulse, then laying it on his brow, and then pressing it upon his heart. Then casting a melancholy look upon the rose-tree, he kneeled, and holding up his clasped hands, asked my pardon. This would have softened a rock. I was moved to tears, and he saw me wipe them away. Judge how high his joy! But, I made a sign to him to go and rest himself, and that he might do so, I retired from his sight. This visit was of more service to him than that of his physician; for, within a few days he was in a fair way of recovery.

From this time he was as timid as he had been rash before. I, for my part, was fearful and diffident; for I still thought of the kiss blown through  
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the air, from the one window to the other; I had it on my lips; and I did all I could to hinder my eyes from gaining me another. Would I have punished the offer of another with equal cruelty? This, thank heaven! is what neither you nor I can know. My heart was not put to another trial of this sort. But, the next trial was more dangerous and my rigour did not hold equally out.

I have told you, that I scarcely ever went out. One fine day, however, my guardians took it into their heads to walk to *Cours-la-Reine*. The bowling green was the only place of amusement that my tutor indulged himself in visiting. Three hours, said he, may be passed more agreeably there than at the opera; and it costs nothing. While he gratified his taste for this innocent pleasure, my aunt and I walked slowly on through the alleys, till a woman came up to us, with a beautiful little bitch which she asked me to purchase. I was tempted to ask the price; but my aunt, at the very first interrupted the bargain, and sent away the merchant.

I felt it hard to be refused such a trifle. But, poor as I imagined myself to be, I had no right to complain, when they sought to be frugal of the little  
money



money which they gave me. I took patience, therefore, and retired in silence, although dissatisfied.

But, when I returned home, great was my surprise to see my little spaniel spring out of the porter's lodge, with a rose-coloured collar about its neck, from which hung a little bell! I took it up, and kissed it: and the porter to whom my aunt put some questions, honestly replied, that a poor woman had brought the little creature, and had said, that it was for me. My aunt grumbled, and I left her to suppose that I had secretly paid for it.

Suppose me then alone in my chamber, with my little spaniel, and thinking what name I should give her. In the folds of the ribbon of her little collar I found a small billet I opened it, and read these words: *I am called Floretta, and he, Hyppolitus Clofan.* Ah! it is he, said I, it is he, no doubt, who having observed me on the walk, and seen my desire to be mistress of this little creature, has made me a present of it. I was not wrong. I have since learned, that he had made this use of the only louis d'or he had in the world. That louis d'or was worth a thousand.

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The little billet was inclosed within this golden heart. It is there still, and shall ever remain there. As for the little spaniel, I leave you to think, whether she ever sat or slept, on any seat or any bed, but mine.

All night was I busily contriving how to shew my gratitude. I was beloved,—that I was sure of: and I wished not to be thought insensible to the attentions of love so fond, so delicate, so affecting.

I was at my window by day break, Clofan came soon after, and saw me holding my little spaniel to my breast, and kissing it with the greatest tenderness. With an expression in his countenance between pleasure and sadness, he looked first at me, and then at the spaniel, with an air so passionate, and so envious of its happiness, that I knew not in what transport of passion, what neglect of reason, I did a very foolish thing. By unlucky chance, I had in my hand, my small mirror, before which I was adjusting my hair;—well, since I must tell you, I turned the mirror towards the young man, and then turning it back to myself, kissed it, and ran away.

My face now glowed, and my eyes swam in tears; I was overwhelmed with pain and confusion. Now  
am

am I engaged for ever, said I to myself, to this young stranger. I am his; I cannot now retract.—He saw me kiss his image in the glass. After this piece of weakness, I am disgraced, if I have not him for my husband.—I was determined from this time, to have none other.

He, for his part, was transported with joy, while I was in this distress. In return for my kiss, he had sent me a thousand others which I had not perceived. But, I know not what malignant eye had surprized us, and my aunt had received notice of our correspondence.

My good guardians consulted between themselves, and, that very night, made me change my apartment, without saying, why.—I suspected their reason, but obeyed without answering a word, lest I should betray myself.

When I was left alone in my prison, I reflected with extreme anxiety on the situation my young lover was likely to be in, when he looked for me, as usual, and I did not appear. Thus strictly watched I knew not to what Saint I should address my prayers, to obtain consolation for him, when I saw a gentleman who had an office in the revenue-department,

ment, and was said to be in favour with the cardinal,—come to wait upon my uncle; and he, before he went away, asked me in marriage for his son.—My young clerk himself suggested this project.

He had been recommended to the financier; and had been told by him that at a proper opportunity, he should be very glad to serve him. Clofan remembered this flattering promise. Despairing of ever seeing me more, and having learned that my guardian was a rich miser, he naturally imagined that I was reserved for some favourite of fortune; and seeing nothing but uncertain and distant hopes of acquiring wealth in his present line of employment, he resolved to take a shorter and easier road to opulence, and went to ask his patron to employ him in the business of the revenue. The financier taking an unfair advantage of the openness with which all suppliants reveal their uneasiness, drew from him the story of his love by which his ambition was prompted, and asked to know the name of the young woman with whom he was captivated. His dependent told him all, except the particulars of our correspondence; and even gave room for suspicions with respect to it, by avowing, that if he should attain to any considerable



considerable employment, he had reason to suppose that he would not be rejected.

I shall think of it, said M. de Bliancour; let me see you again, one of these mornings. The young man went away, with a grateful heart. His patron had actually the goodness to think of him. But, he designed also to think of me. He had heard from my lover, that I was handsome. He knew not but I might be rich. He could easily learn what property my father had left; and a childless, covetous, old uncle, afforded a good prospect. He thought that I would suit his own son; and in the first place, to rid him of a troublesome rival, sent Clofan to a province, to serve his apprenticeship to the business of the revenue; and then waited on my uncle, to offer me the hand of the most idiot son that rich man ever had.

Only think what a difference. I speak not of figure. Please God! I shall never think of comparing a shapeless lump to the very perfection of grace and beauty! But, as to understanding, ah! there was more ingenuity of thought, greater delicacy of sentiment in a single gesture of my young clerk, than in all the foolish gallantry of the insipid Bliancour. But, had he possessed the wit of Fontenelle,

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it could not have gained me. I refused him at once ; and told my uncle, that at the age of seventeen, one needed not to be in such haste to marry. He boasted of my suitor's fortune ; but, I assured him, that, with all his wealth, the man could never please me. Miss must have a husband to please her ? said my aunt peevishly. Well ! I, for my part, am weary of watching her conduct. Let her take her choice, between marriage and a nunnery. I joyfully preferred the nunnery, hoping to find it at least not quite so close a prison.

But, this is enough for to-day. You have had some comic scenes. To-morrow's breakfast will be accompanied with a more serious tale.

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SECOND BREAKFAST.

*The Nunnery and the Wood.*

NEXT morning when we were assembled in the parlour about the tea-table, our good lady thus resumed her story.

Do you believe in the influence of the stars ? Indeed, my friends, I do ; I even flatter myself, that I have a star of my own, and you shall hear my

reasons for thinking so. This star of mine, to rusticate me the more entirely, and the more effectually to disconcert my young lover, (who had tried all means to see me which love and madness can contrive) determined my uncle to send me quietly to the abbey of Pont-aux Dames in which were relations of his.

The abbess gave him her word of honour, that I should be inaccessible and invisible to all mankind; and as he depended upon her, I knew what she had promised. My uncle had informed her, that I had some little love-affair in my head, of which he wanted to cure me; and love was to this abbess what is called *the black beast*. I know what mischief he might have done her; but the poor lady could not hear his name, without shuddering. God help her! she watched me very narrowly; but I was nothing better for this vigilance, nor yet mortified by it: for I had no means nor hopes to obtain news from the only being on earth I cared for.

He must have become weary, said I, of looking out for me; and in despair of seeing me again, he has probably forgotten me. Alas! he has done well, then. Why cannot I also forget him? I had brought with me, my little spaniel, the only comfort

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fort left me: to her I made all my complaints. I was envied this satisfaction; and within a few days after my arrival, the abbess signified to me, that I must deprive myself of it. Neither my intreaties, nor tears could move her, and the whole convent witnessed my distress.

My dear little Floretta! were they going to drown thee, or only to turn thee out? Fortunately, one of my companions who felt for my grief, proposed, to console me, that she would send Floretta to her mother, and recommend the poor creature to her care. She was from Rosay, a small town, near the convent; and when her mother came next to see her, she might bring me my little spaniel, and I might sometimes see it again. This afforded me inexpressible consolation, and seemed a happy presage of the event of my love. I sent Floretta, therefore, to my friend's mother. The letter I sent with her would have moved your heart with pity. The abbess herself was affected by it; for we might write nothing that was not shewn to her: this was a regulation in the convent.

Mademoiselle de Nuify, (this was the young woman's name,) knew not what right she had to my gratitude, or how dearly I valued the treasure I had



intrusted to her mother. When I spoke of Floretta, sighing, and with tears in my eyes, she laughed at my childishness. Happy she! nothing had she seen from her window, to disturb her heart.

You may guess the state of mine. What was become of the unfortunate youth? What thought he of me? Did he still think of me? Was he not much to be pitied, if he yet loved me? These ideas haunted me, no less when I was asleep, than when I was awake. And yet, the object of all my anxiety was within a few leagues of me.

He was Comptroller of the Revenue at Meaux, and as he supposed me to be still in captivity in my uncle's house, he was inflamed, at once, with love, ambition, and eager impatience to raise himself, that he might have such a fortune to offer as my relations might not think unworthy of me.

One day, at last, when the business of his office had brought him to Rosay, and he happened to be in one of those little circles of society which are formed in small towns, he saw before one of the ladies, a spaniel which bore a perfect resemblance to that which he had given me. The resemblance attracted his notice, he praised its beauty, and caressing

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receiving it, knew the bell and collar which had been bound by himself upon its neck. Ah! madam, cried he, earnestly, where got you this pretty, little creature?

Madame de Nuisy asked nothing better than an opportunity to tell her story. Alas! said she, I granted it entertainment out of pity. A young lady, a companion of my daughter's, had brought it with her to the convent in which they are together. The rules of the convent permitted her not to keep it. The poor child knew not to whom she should intrust it, and was in great distress. My daughter has a good heart. She could not see her in that condition, without pitying her: and they both begged me to take care of the poor creature, which must otherwise have been turned out to be taken up by the first passenger that fancied it. Then, to render her story more affecting, she read my two letters, (for I had written a second letter, to thank her for her hospitality to Floretta,) and every one was moved.

I leave you to think what impression this little narrative which shewed what a value I set on his present, made upon my young lover. He feigned a smile at the innocent simplicity of my letters, and asked

asked leave to read them, himself. In his emotion, while his eyes were fixed upon those characters traced by my hand, and he adored the signature of *Philippina Oray de Valsan*, upon seeing it now for the first time, he was ready to die with a desire to press it to his lips. But, he restrained his impatience for fear of betraying himself.

He entered softly into conversation with Madame de Nuify, talked of her daughter, made her tell all that she knew, and all that he wanted to know of my convent. She enlarged in praise of the perfect security which innocence there enjoyed, of the vigilance of the abbess, and the strictness with which she prohibited all intercourse between her convent, and the world. The whole result of her information was, that regulations severely enforced, impenetrable walls, inaccessible grates, and inexorable keepers divided me from him; melancholy subject for reflexion!

He was sure, that I was there. But, an imprudent, and unsuccessful attempt, whether to write to or to see me, might occasion me to be taken from this convent, and removed to a greater distance, and beyond his search. It was an unhop'd for blessing, that I should have been sent to a place of confinement

confinement so near his port. His meeting with the little spaniel was still more miraculous. But, the more he valued this piece of good fortune, so much the more careful should he be, not to abuse it.

Before attacking the castle, he began with observing its environs, situation, and aspect. But, no hope to make his way into it, no hope was there that he might even approach the parlour. He discovered at last, that young village maids came sometimes to the convent from the neighbouring farms, with cream, flowers, or fruits which the boarders bought at the grate. He was, as I have already told you, of a fair complexion, and his cheeks were yet covered with a soft down. Nothing could be easier or more likely to succeed than for him to disguise himself, like a country girl, and to appear at the grate of the convent with a basket of flowers under his arm, and a bundle on his head.

I went thither with my companions. And although I had seen Clofan only at a distance, I should have known him by his blue eyes and fair hair. The slightest resemblance would have been enough to engage my attention; but the more I observed him so much the more was I moved. At last while my companions



companions were eager about the flowers, I fixed my eyes upon his, and perceived at once by their expression, that it was my love. Come, Madam, buy my flowers, said he, in a tone of sweetness; here is a nosegay I have made up with great care. I took it, and as I was paying him, saw written upon it with his own hand; *It is for you*. Never had I felt such an emotion before. The impression made upon my heart by the accent of that sweet voice which I now heard for the first time, the ravishing delight with which I was affected at seeing so near me, that countenance animated by love, those eyes sparkling with fire, at the same time, my terror left some one of my companions, or of those who were charged with the care of us, might observe what was passing between him and me, in short all that is most overpowering in joy or fear, produced such an agitation in my mind that I must have betrayed myself, if the clock had not struck, and terminated the interview.

Fortunately my companions were too agreeably occupied with the flowers and fruits to think of me. They talked afterwards of the fair-haired maid, and I learned, that she had promised to return, within three days, on the evening before the festival of

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Capus Christi, and to bring flowers, to decorate the church and altar.

Returning to my cell, and indulging in such reflexions as my love suggested, I could not avoid wondering at the star which seemed to preside over our fate, and to rule us both with equal influence. In the mean time, untying my nosegay, to put in water, I found a paper about it upon which were written the following words. "Heaven loves us, dear Philippina, and does wonders for us. Our enemies, when they think to separate, bring us together, I have an office at Meaux, which is at no great distance from this place. At Rosay I learned where you were concealed. The severity of your abbess in forbidding you your little spaniel which you kindly love, seems to have been ordered by heaven that I might discover your place of retreat. Love has taught me to contrive means by which we may see one another. We know each other's hearts. We knew that we loved each other before we could say so in words. Let us be unalterably constant. We are both orphans; neither of us has any fortune; but we are both of good families; and this is enough.—My labour will in a little time procure us a comfortable situation. Hope and courage are all that love requires. I have need  
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of both; refuse me not a word which may inspire them." and it was signed, HIPPOLITUS CLOSAN.

Who could have been inhuman enough to refuse the word he asked? I tried however to intermingle reason with sentiment. I acknowledged that I was affected with the kindness which he still continued to entertain for me. But I blamed his imprudence. I shewed the danger of an artifice which, if discovered, might make me a subject of idle conversation in the convent; and I ended with advising him, both for his own peace and mine, to forget an unhappy girl who was entirely dependent on her uncle's kindness, and was satisfied with depending on him alone. In truth, I hoped that he would not follow my advice.

He came back, three days after, among a croud of young country girls, which came eagerly to deck out the church of the convent with flowers. The boarders were intrusted with the care of decorating the altar: and in the presence of the nuns, we joined the country-girls, and, for half the day, busied ourselves with them, in making nosegays, garlands, and festoons.

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My young lover and I had thus an opportunity of placing ourselves on our knees, before the altar, opposite to one another, and with nothing between us, but a basket of flowers. Our hands moved about the flowers, but we durst not suffer them to meet. With so many witnesses about us, I never in my life, was in greater confusion, or more uneasy; yet never did I pass any happier moments. I had my billet to deliver. I slipped it under a rose; and it was, that instant, taken up, with admirable dexterity. After this I was more calm, and saw him go well pleased away. We were both of us far from foreseeing what a misfortune awaited us.

Envy infects all ranks. Among the neighbouring girls, the fair maid from Cressy, had been too much distinguished by the beauty of her offering, and by a certain air of neatness, elegance, and dignity which her companions wanted. She was observed with jealous eyes; and malice found something singular and equivocal in her appearance. Her stature, her air, her carriage, her features, her voice, and then that fair down which was just beginning to lose its downy softness—all these circumstances together occasioned suspicions. Some put questions to him, which he eluded by taking leave



of them; but they continued to compare all these particulars which they had observed among them, of his person, till it was agreed that the fair maid could be none other than a gallant in disguise.

This story found its way into the convent. The abbess was informed of it: and the alarm spread through the little society. You may easily conceive with what anxious curiosity my companions busied themselves about it; and what a variety of conjectures arose in their young imaginations. I did all that I could to shake off my uneasiness, and joined the opinion of those who thought the thing incredible.

Those young country-girls had all promised to come back eight days after. She from Cressly had promised particularly. We waited for that time, to have our doubts cleared up. However, the abbess, had, in the mean time, set on foot an enquiry at Cressly. I was distressed that I could not warn Closhan of his danger.

He returned, as he had promised, with a still finer basket of flowers, and a more deliberate air. But, on that day, the pensioners were not allowed to go without the cloister. The servants received the offerings, and were desired to tell the girls that

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the abbess wished to see them in the parlour. They waited upon her. After praising their zeal, she dismissed them. I was ready to die when I heard that the young woman from Cressy had been detained, and the abbess was interrogating her.

Whence are you? asked she, with the severe tone of a judge. He easily understood, that she was prepared to disbelieve whatever he might answer; for indeed the fair maid of Cressy was not even known in the place to which she pretended to belong. His object now, was, to escape himself, and to save me. If he should suffer himself to be questioned, he was sure to be undone. Happily, it occurred to him to amuse the abbess with a story which might outwit her penetration.

I was born at Cressy, madam, said he, and should have lived there still, had not a misfortune happened me, which obliged my father and mother to retire from Cressy to the village of Roisa, to place me beyond the pursuit of a ravisher who was going to carry me off by violence.—Carry you off?—Oh! my God, yes, madam, at the age of sixteen, had it not been for my own prudence, I had been carried off by a young courtier who came often to Cressy, and tried a thousand arts to ensnare me. But,

I thank heaven! his arts were vain. He then related the temptations, the attacks, the artifices of the young man; how he pursued him through the gardens and arbours, and how ardently he had pressed him to go to Paris, and be a woman of quality.

The more animated his description, so much the more was the abbess's attention attracted, and her anxiety moved. She wondered how such a young innocent should have escaped seduction; and every new danger she spoke of, excited new alarm. The wicked wretch! cried she. He was young you say, and his figure was perhaps agreeable?—Yes, madam, he was an handsome man, and proper, I allow; but though he was also gentle and insinuating, I was not to be deluded; for in his gentleness, there was an air of malice and artifice. In his eyes particularly, there was something odd; sometimes they were full of languishing tenderness, and sometimes brisk and sparkling like two stars. It was then he would say the tenderest and most incredible things to me. Yet still would not I trust him. But, the oftener I repeated that he was a liar, so much the more earnestly did he vow the contrary.—Ah! my daughter, it was your duty to flee from him. I did so, madam, from arbour to arbour; but he knew the turnings and windings much better than I, and

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I still found him in my way again. Sometimes I was breathless, and so weary that I was obliged to rest me on the green.—On the green!—Then was he before me, with sighs and tender complaints.—Before you, at your knees, my daughter?—But, I made him ashamed of himself. It well becomes a young man of your quality to throw yourself at the feet of a poor country-girl!—He answered that beauty was the queen of the world. And then I was obliged to be angry, and make him rise. I had a good deal of difficulty to disengage myself out of his hands! When I pushed them away, he only kissed mine. What audacity! said the abbess, he kiss your hands!—And if you had seen how he looked, madam, while he kissed them! This is not all.—What then!—Would you suppose it, madam? he had the impudence one day, to slip a rich diamond on my finger. But I threw it at him, and would have none of it. Go, sir, said I, never ring will I wear, but a ring given by a husband.—Very well, my girl! since that time, I hope he has left you undisturbed.—Alas! no; I had much more trouble to suffer.—But, why did you imprudently delay to inform your father and mother?—Alas! every time that he gave me uneasiness, he intreated so humbly to say nothing of it, and asked my pardon so many times, and in so suppliant a voice, that



I was patient for fear of making him my enemy. At last, however, the wicked man one day surprised me alone, gathering straw-berries, on the edge of the forest, in the morning, while all the birds merrily sung—Ah! unlucky creature, what carried you there?—I have told you, madam, that I went to gather straw-berries. But, it is late, I see, and my mother will be uneasy at my stay. It is time for me to have done. A moment, said the abbess, I would know, at least——You shall know all, madam, I will come back to-morrow, and relate the rest. But, if I should stay longer now, my mother might be angry with me, and you would not have her to be angry with me. So saying, he curtsied, and ran away.

What an adventure! said the abbess, to what dangers is innocence exposed in the world! In truth, I tremble for her. I long for to-morrow, that I may hear how she extricated herself.

Next day, she expected the fair-haired maid, with extreme impatience. But, the damsel returned not. The abbess was then convinced that she had been imposed upon, and was highly irritated. She sent to make the same enquiries at Roisa which had been made at Cressy. Her emissaries could obtain

tain no information of the person she sought after; but that her adventure in the convent was a subject of conversation through all the neighbouring villages, and that she was supposed to have been rather a fair-haired young man than a fair-haired maid. I was in a state of trepidation; for my companions had overheard, and told me all. The impostor! the villain! said the abbess, he had deceived me, and thought to escape me by his lies; but I shall get him yet, and make him repent what he has done. She, with this, set herself to contrive, who the rogue could be, and which of us could have occasioned his coming. She soon fixed upon me. My uncle had confided to her the story of my love. She wrote to him an account of the adventure, and described the seducer against whom she was enraged. My uncle, being struck with the resemblance, went immediately to enquire of Biancour, how he had disposed of the young clerk.—He is settled at Meaux, said the financier.—At Meaux! that was well done! said my uncle. I had sent my ward to Meaux. He has discovered her. You shall see what has happened. The abbess has written to me.

Biancour, already piqued at my refusal of his son, will be still more vexed to think that my uncle and he should have undesignedly brought his rival  
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and me together; and determined upon removing Clofan more effectually out of the way by shutting him up in confinement. The minister was an old prelate who made others do penance for the peccadilloes of his own younger years. Our enemy had more credit with him than was necessary, to ruin an innocent person.

The audacity of a young man who had taken a profane advantage of a holy festival, and under pretence of zeal to decorate the altars, had introduced himself in the disguise of a woman into a convent, in pursuit of a young orphan, whom he had before pestered with his addresses, in her guardian's house, — was represented to the cardinal as an act of the highest criminality. Yet, the old man was so good as to see nothing but libertinism in what the casuists in his council called sacrilege: and a few years spent in St Lazarus's seemed to him punishment enough for a fault for which he could find an excuse in the recollection of his own amours. Clofan was therefore removed to St Lazarus's.

The abbess had not revealed my secret, — or even hinted to me, that she was acquainted with it. But, in presence of the whole convent, she told us, that the audacious villain was punished, and named

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the place of his confinement. At the name of St Lazarus's, I turned pale, trembled, and saw all eyes fixed upon me, and that I was betrayed by my distress. Well! yes, cried I, shedding tears, I am the cause of his misfortune, but I call heaven to witness that I am innocently the cause of it, and that there was nothing criminal in the intentions of this unfortunate youth.

For you, Miss, I have no doubt of your being innocent, said the abbess, as you may see by your being still here. But, presume not to justify an impious seducer, a sacriligious profaner, since you force me to speak of his guilt in all its horror. My tears were redoubled; and although I strove to command them, it was all in vain. I intreated the abbess to prevail with my uncle to send me to some other place. She promised that she would. But, either she hoped to soothe me, or my guardian took time to consider how he might shut me up in closer confinement, or perhaps they hoped to reduce me to their own terms, and weary out my fortitude: so I was left to sigh and pine away, without being removed.

It was no longer my grate, or the walls of the convent that distressed me. The walls of St Laza-

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rus's, the locks and bars which confined my lover occupied all my thoughts. It was there oppressive power rigorously confined him whose only crime was, that he had loved me too well.—I viewed him alone, in despair, and in the agony of his grief, perhaps forcing his keepers to exert their cruelty upon him. This prospect rising incessantly upon my imagination, I watered my bed with my tears, and filled my room with half-stifled groans. My prison became to me a place of horror; and I resolved to leave it. I succeeded at the risk of my life. I stole from the door of the gardiner's cottage, one evening, cords which he used at his work, knotted them into a ladder, hung it from my window, and fixing its other end to the branches of a tree which grew near the wall, by this dangerous expedient made my escape. But, at day-break, when I had passed this danger, and made my way out into the country, what was I to do? This was an interesting concern.—

I had more than once heard an old vicar in the neighbourhood, mentioned in the convent, as being one of the gentlest, most indulgent, and most obliging of men. He was vicar of Mareuil His village, and the road to it, had been pointed out to me. My intention was to go and throw myself

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at his feet, and acquaint him with the bold resolution I had taken. But, it was necessary, that I should reach him unperceived, and for this I had not time. I had spent the night in making my escape. And when I saw myself without the walls of the convent, the breaking of day renewed my fears. The country-people would see me, and give information at the convent. I should be stopped, and carried back to confinement. What a shame would this occasion to me! In how criminal a light would my attempt to escape be viewed! unhappy creature! it was nothing to see myself in captivity; but, to be disgraced! My courage forsook me, and I began to weep. As I wept, I invoked heaven, to witness the innocence of my heart; and falling on my knees, recommended to God, a poor orphan, reduced to despair!

While I was praying, I observed between me and Quincy, a small wood, considerably thick, and it occurred to me that I might conceal myself there till next night. I shall find water, said I to myself, and for hunger I can bear it.

I now turned towards the wood, and after concealing myself in it, sat down upon my little parcel, and thanked heaven for offering me this shelter.

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Would you think it? I felt joy at hearing the birds sing there; and all those ideas of liberty, love, and happiness which their song naturally suggests joined to steal away my heart from anxiety and fear, and to soothe it with a pleasing reverie. I was charmed to see the hare with its little family about it, paying their court to Aurora, amidst the thyme and the dew, and

I did not foresee that this was to occasion my being exposed to one of the greatest dangers by which my time of life was liable to be affected.

A huntsman, with his fowling-piece under his arm came across the plain, towards the wood in which I was concealed. He was young and active, and must soon have overtaken me, if I had attempted to flee; but indeed I had not strength to flee. Terrified at his approach, I hid myself by retiring farther among the thick foliage, and there remained without moving or breathing. I never once thought of the danger I was in, of being shot; all my fear was, lest I should be discovered.

The huntsman looked about for some time, and suddenly, I saw him aim his piece straight at the bush in which I was hidden. He shot, the lead whistled about me! And in a moment of terror

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which I could not repress, I screamed out, and this betrayed me.

The huntsman, little less terrified than I was, cried likewise, and asked whether I was hurt. No, thank heaven! said I. Yes, thank heaven! said he, encouraging me. He then viewed me with an air of surprise and pleasure. What a pity would it have been, and what pain should I have felt, if I had killed so pretty a turtle! And what is she doing in the wood? Expecting her mate? This tone of familiarity displeased me. You see, said I, an orphan, persecuted by misfortune, and seeking to escape from it. I was waiting till night should come on. Night, said he, smiling! night in a wood, and at your age! and whence came you? From a convent in which I was confined.—And where do you think of going?—To an old man not far off, who will be a father to me.—Who is that old man; I know all the neighbourhood.—Excuse me there; this is my secret.—Your secret, child, I guess is some love-affair. There is always love in convent adventures; they are all alike. Yes, I warrant you have some lover whom you are forbidden to see, and for this, have made your escape. Confess, frankly. Finding me thus, said I to him, you have a right to suppose whatever you please.



Heaven is my witness, that there has never been aught in my conduct, but honour and innocence. During this dialogue, his eyes were fixed on mine. I was sitting, and he standing. He had a degree of boldness in his countenance; and there appeared a certain expression of anxiety and irresolution in his air and aspect. He remained for some time pensive and motionless, having his hands fixed on his gun. I was intimidated by the keenness of his looks, and remained also silent. What age are you? asked he. —Seventeen years. —Seventeen years! and have you lost your father and mother? —Alas! I have. —Are you rich? —No. —I am in easy circumstances; I am unmarried; and if you want a good husband —I am obliged to you; but do not chuse to dispose of myself; I wish to spend some time in another convent. Good, that! convents! nothing is so gloomy and dismal. Come, miss, better be a jolly huntsman's house-keeper, —a thousand times better this, than the best convent in the world. He was then proceeding to relate what a joyous life we should lead. I interrupted him, and begged him to begone, and continue his hunting. Begone, and leave you here till night; impossible! Faith, you are too handsome. I will not leave you; I must be your companion at night. You must leave me, answered I, otherwise I must begone myself, at the risk of being known

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and carried back to confinement.—You are much afraid of me, then?—No, but I know that it becomes me not, to be here alone with a man.—And who is there to protect you when I go?—Heaven, the guardian of innocence.—It will do more, if it protects you, than it always does for young girls in woods. And, as he spoke, his eyes became more animated. Leave me, said I, urgently. I beseech, I conjure you, leave me. Then he seemed resolved. It is your desire? said he, I must obey you. But, the day is long; have you any thing to eat?—Alas! I have nothing.—Let me then give you the bread and wine I have brought for my breakfast. If you please, said I, and will permit me to pay for what you leave. I took out my purse; but he had the generosity to refuse the money. I thanked him; and as the last favour I should request, begged him to be silent as to our meeting. Oh! as for the concealment of your secret, madam, said he smiling, you must pay me for that; I must have no less than the small golden heart which hangs upon that fair bosom. I cannot part with it, said I; it was my mother's. I should like to have it, however, said he, with sparkling eyes. Let me kiss it, at least. And as he said these words, he put his hand to it. I moved back, in terror.

Seeing me pale, he stopped, and after a moment's silence, said, in a faint and faltering voice; Madam, I am young, yet honest; yes, I am, and will be so. Adieu, I will not be the man to abuse your situation. But, do not pass the night in this wood; trust me, do not. Till night, I shall watch at a distance, to guard you from harm. Farewel, you shall see me no more!

I have since reflected on the agitation in which the young man's mind appeared to be, his altered voice, the fire which animated his countenance, and sparkled in his eyes, the fixed eagerness with which he gazed on the little golden heart which hung by my neck, and have wondered at the resolution with which he left me, after giving me his bread and wine. Many heroes would have behaved less magnanimously: I question if the boasted continence of Scipio deserved equal praise with that of my huntsman. I dined on his presents: and as I wanted rest, after my fatigue in the night, I lay down and slept for a few hours. When night returned, I proceeded on my way to Mareuil.

We shall arrive there to-morrow, I have travelled far enough, to-day, said she, and must now rest me.

THIRD

## THIRD BREAKFAST.

*The Clergyman and the Hospital.*

I TREMBLED as I entered the clergyman's door, replied Madame de Clofan, when the party was again assembled round the breakfast table. Young as I was, and a run-away from a convent, how should I appear before an old vicar? What would he say of me? and what should I say to him? the plain truth. This thought restored my confidence. I knocked. An old woman opened to me. What would you have? said she.—I would speak to the vicar.—Immediately?—Immediately. I have been told that he is at all times accessible to the unfortunate. He is so, replied she; and instantly introduced me.

The vicar received me with surprise; but with his usual air of kindness. Sir, said I, let me first beg you to recommend it to this good woman that she tell no person, that I am in your house. He then called back his house-keeper, and after whispering somewhat to her, returned and told me, that I might make myself easy.

Sir, then replied I, protect me. I am an orphan, and extremely unhappy. If you forsake me, I can



endure life no longer. It is the reputation of your virtue and humanity that has induced Philippina Gray de Valfan to throw herself at your feet.

The resolution of despair which he saw expressed in my countenance moved him deeply. He began with soothing, and promising me every good office in his power; and then asked whence I came?—From Paris.—Where had I been last?—At Pont-aux-Dames.—Why had I left that convent?—That I might enter some other, equally holy, and more to my liking. That was all I wished.—It is my desire, said I, to devote myself to the service of the unfortunate; from my own situation I learn, that nothing in the world is more sacred than misfortune. I am poor, yet I have the pride to desire to be free. There is an order which was instituted for the relief of the poor, by the most virtuous, the most compassionate of men, a man whom you resemble, Vincent de Paul; it is the order of the Gray Sisters. I could never hear it named without feeling strong emotions of tenderness and veneration. I know nothing nobler than the purposes to which those women have dedicated themselves. Among them would I conceal myself: and, in this, sir, I need your assistance. Do a good action by condescending to recommend me, I dare not say, by presenting me, yourself.

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He would not allow me to take the fatigue of staying more at this time; but, made me take some food, and then retire to rest. I related to him, on the next day, some part of what you have heard, but with a degree of sensibility and ingenuous simplicity which I can now no longer assume, and which greatly affected him.

He had viewed me with pity, while he listened to my story, and when I had ended; will you forgive me, said he, for explaining the nature of your invocation. The young man is at St Lazarus's, and you wish to be near him. True, said I, my greatest happiness would be to acquaint him that I was there. I will remain there so long as he is in confinement. During that time, I will do all that is possible to deserve that I may become a happy wife and mother. When he is free, I shall be so, too; for under the good rule of Vincent de Paul, a year is the term of engagement. And if I may be, at last united to my lover, God will permit me to ask this reward before the altar, for the care which I shall have taken of the sick poor. If again we are denied all hopes of being united, the condition I have embraced, will afford me consolation.

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The vicar of Mareuil did not dislike this contrivance for beguiling the tedium of absence.

But, why, said he, should you not acquaint your relations with this laudable resolution? They would treat it, answered I, as a foolish fancy of disappointed love, and would make him be punished, for whose sake I have taken the resolution. They would have the cruelty to envy us the happiness of knowing, that we were near one another. I have told you, that gold only is what they value; and my lover's crime is, that he has no fortune. Take me out of their hands, otherwise I can no longer answer for myself.

My child, said he, if you had a father and mother, all the pity I feel for your situation, would not induce me to detain you from them. But, you are an orphan; and a tutor's rights are, I must confess, less sacred in my eyes. What I am going to do for you, is by no means prudent; and although my age and character render my conduct sufficiently grave, yet I know that I shall be exposed to some malicious censures. But, *less prudence, and more benevolence* has been always my motto; Courage to do good, is not courage for nothing. You ask admission into the most sacred asylum which can be cho-

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sen, and desire to embrace the most virtuous of all conditions. I will second this pious, and gallant purpose. Remain here in concealment. When I suppose the search and pursuit after you to have ceased, I shall myself conduct and present you to the abbess of the heroines of charity.

Within a few days after this interview, I was admitted under his auspices, as an orphan, the care of whom had been recommended to him, he said, by providence.

I was now one of the gray sisters, and but a few paces from my lover. But, that intercourse between the two houses with which my imagination had pleased itself, was absolutely and strictly prohibited; and the period of my novitiate being wholly occupied in the discharge of the holy duties of the character I had assumed, not a moment was left me for liberty or relaxation. My only consolation was to see myself near those walls in which the object of my heart heavily passed his hours.

But, the good curate of Mareuil had not forgotten us. The report of my elopement having been noised abroad, had rendered little Floretta famous, and that innocent animal had suffered under my disgrace.



disgrace. Madame de Nuisy loudly disavowed all knowledge of me. My daughter, said she, had no particular connexion with that young woman: it was only out of pity, that we obliged her by taking charge of her little spaniel; and that nothing from such a girl may remain with me, let any person who pleases take it away. Give it to me, said the good vicar, who happened, by good luck, to be present. But, this was the smallest of the services he did us.

The diocese of Meaux is conterminous with that of Paris, and in the latter, the good old priest had a friend of his own character. Will you not be at St Lazarus' in the course of the approaching Lent? said he to that friend. If you are, remember a young man of the name of Closan who is confined there for an act of imprudence, which has been considered as criminal. Speak kindly to him, soothe his uneasiness, and try if you can abridge the period of his confinement. Persuade them not to sour the native work of his heart, for I know him to be well-born: and if you have an opportunity, let him know that he will find a friend in the old curate of Mareuil.

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These words being faithfully repeated to the General of St Lazarus made an impression so much the more favourable because they came from an old man, the sanctity of whose manners was known and revered, and because the young man had behaved in such a manner as to win the good will of those about him.

The General ordered him to be called, and asked whether he were, in any way related to the vicar of Mareuil. He replied, that he had not the honour of knowing the vicar. You have a true friend, however, replied the Lazarist, in that worthy pastor. He then made Clofan tell him our little story, and Clofan related it with all the sincerity he might. The pious Lazarist thought that it might be proper to acquaint the Cardinal with the particulars: and that minister who had no aversion to love-stories, heard it with a degree of interest. Come, said he to the General, these few months he has already been confined, are sufficient correction for a youthful folly. At that time of life, nature is frail, as you and I can yet remember, father. Clofan was set at liberty.

His first care, you may well suppose, was to thank his deliverer, and to enquire what passed in the convent

vent during his absence. When he entered the minister's house, the first object that met him was Floretta. Ah! thou wilt always be an omen of good fortune to me, said he; and had taken her up in his arms when the vicar appeared.

Generous old man, said he, to whom I owe my liberty, and perhaps more than my life,—whose kindness extends even to this little creature; you will surely tell me news of my Mistress, and whether she be still in confinement in the convent of Port-aux-Dames? She is no longer there, said the good vicar.—Her guardian has then removed her elsewhere?—No, she is at liberty, and out of his power; she is in safety.—You overjoy me. And where is the place of her retreat?—That I must not tell you: I must first know what is going to become of you.—Alas! I know not myself. I have lost my post; and can I hope that he who gave me it, will now, after I have been thus imprudent, deign to concern himself about me? I must wait upon him, however, for I have no other resource. But, will you not have the goodness to crown your favours by telling me where she is, whom I love more than my own life?—She is well; she is waiting for you. Were you to know more, you would again be foolish. I will not contribute

to

any new imprudence in your conduct. You are young; you possess spirit and abilities, raise yourself to a situation in which you may live decently and creditably; she shall then be yours. This is all I can say; and with this, my dear pupil, be you satisfied, and let us dine together, cheerfully.

Clostan determined to return, that same evening, to Paris, to solicit an employment: and when he took leave of his generous benefactor, recommended Floretta to his care.—Yes, while I live, I shall take care of her, said the vicar, and even, in case of my death, I will endeavour to provide for her. If you should die, I shall not survive you, said Clostan, for the secret on which my life depends, will die with you. Truly, said the vicar, you make me think of that; it would be cruel, to expose you to such a risk; but I must take care that you suffer not by this means. Then leaving him alone, for a few minutes, he returned with a sealed billet, and said, here is your secret; if I should chance to die, this billet will inform you where Philippina Oray de Valsan is concealed. But, you must give me your word, that this billet shall not be opened, till after my death. Consider whether it may be better preserved in your own hands, or in the hands of some notary named by yourself. Make your



choice; I can depend upon you, if you will answer for yourself.

O best of men, said Clofan throwing himself at his feet, you do my probity an honour of which I feel all the value, and think myself worthy of it. But at my age, and while the heart is full with an ardent passion, it would be rash to presume so much upon my own strength. In some situations, we lose the mastery over ourselves. This billet, you say, will assist me to find out Philippina Oray de Valsan; but I am not to open it, till you are no more. Well, I will not trust myself. You have nobly offered to trust me; but, I dare not accept your confidence. Put it into the hands of the notary under whom I was employed; and he mentioned his name. The good Vicar was, at this, much pleased with what he had done for him.

I need hardly tell you how harsh a reception Clofan had from the selfish and surly Biancour. He would see him, only to tell him, that he had no more favours to expect from him, and then shut his door upon him. However, as he had acted with assiduity and ability in his employment, the officers to which he was known obtained his re-establishment; but it was in a disadvantageous

stagnant and remote situation upon the confines of Savoy, among the mountains of Dauphiny. This place hardly afforded necessaries for an obscure and lonely life; and he would never have thought of offering me so uncomfortable a condition. But, the star in which I have such faith, followed him to the mountains of Savoy, and me in the pilgrimage which was prescribed me when I left the convent of the Gray Sisters, at the end of my noviciate.

The hospital of Embrun was served by those Gray Sisters, and I had been sent thither. As I was so young, my superiors assigned me none but the most modest duties to perform about the sick. One of my tasks was to prepare and administer such drinks as suited their situation: but I always wore a veil over my face, upon such occasions.

One day, when I approached the bed-side of a young man who was very ill in an ardent fever. You start. Yes, it was he himself; for I wish not to surprise you. Sorrow, fatigue, and long watching had inflamed his blood; and not being well able to procure the necessary assistance at home, the unfortunate youth had recourse to our cares; and had taken a chamber in the hospital, as respectable enough citizens often do.

One day then, when I presented myself before him, with a cup in my hand, and wearing my veil, I saw him turn away his head, and put back with his hand the cup which I offered. You must endeavour, said I, to get the better of your aversion to it; a moment's disgust is nothing in comparison of health: have but a little courage. Ah! said he, I have courage to die, and that is all I want. Leave me.

I had never heard his voice, above once or twice in my life: and yet, although feeble, and altered by sorrow, it made an impression upon me, but only a confused impression. He might have recollected mine, although he had scarcely heard it; but the improbability of the circumstance hindered both him and me from guessing immediately at the truth. It was merely from humanity, therefore, that I said to him, sir, in the name of whatever is dearest to you in the world, refuse me not. What I hold dearest in the world is lost to me, replied he. I shall see her no more, or shall see her perhaps in the arms of another. Leave me, leave me to die.

At these words, my emotion was redoubled, although I durst not yet hope what I wished. In a voice almost as faint as his own; wherefore, said I, should you suppose, that she is ravished from you?

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At the very moment perhaps when you would die for her, she is hoping to see you again, and to live for you.

Angel of consolation, said he, turning his head about to me, would you then restore me not only to life, but to happiness?—I cannot give you an idea of what I here felt, thus to find again all that I valued on earth, thus stretched upon a bed of sorrow.

My first emotion would have prompted me to raise my veil. But, in the state of weakness in which I saw him, such a sudden surprise might have cost him his life. I checked myself, therefore; but the effort was too much for me. My knees tottered, and the cup shook in my hand. Fortunately, sister Theresa, who had the inspection of my conduct came up, and by her presence, restored my courage. She represented to the patient, that the drink was necessary to him; and I recovering my spirits, added, Come, sir, for love, at least. Ah! for the love of her, said he, what would I not do? So saying, he took the cup, and at one draught, drank off the contents, without any appearance of disgust.

My comrade was pleased with the gentle language in which I spoke to the sick. By expressions of



sympathy like these, said she, are they best consoled. It is often in the mind that the illness is seated; especially at his time of life.

In this accidental interview methought I saw a figural instance of the favouring interposition of heaven; and no sooner was I left by myself, than I kneeled and poured out my gratitude in thanksgiving to God. But what gave me the highest pleasure, was to think how greatly Clofan would be affected, what virtuous means I had used to maintain my fidelity, and preserve myself for him.

Sister Theresa remarking with what docility the patient obeyed me, left me to take care of him, but this was still under her eye and constant observation. Ah! it was not in this instance, that my cares were meritorious. Oh! God! what duty could I have preferred to that of watching by the sick-bed of my lover!

The next time I offered him drink; Is it still, for the love of her? said he—Yes, it is still for the love of her.—Ah! would that she knew it! If she knew that it is the distress of my separation from her which has reduced me to the state in which I am! My sister, I shall name her to you, when I expire.

You

You shall visit a good vicar to whom she is known, and tell him, that I died, adoring her. How great was virtue! or rather, how great the strength with which I was inspired by the fear of seeing him expire before me, if I should reveal myself! This incredible degree of firmness I was able to exert. No, you shall not die, said I to him. But, she shall one day know what you have suffered, and her heart shall thank you. She shall thank you for the care you have allowed to be taken of a life which is devoted to her. Yes, to my last sigh devoted, said he, and held out his hand, to take the cup.

But, while I bowed to give him it, my veil hung loosely from my face, so that he could discern my features, and he making a sudden movement, removed it entirely, and I was betrayed.—O God! great God! it is she! At these words, I thought I should see him expire before my eyes; and in my turn, uttered a shriek. My companion came running in and found him in a swoon, and me cold, pale, and stretched on the foot of the bed.

Sister Theresa's first care, was to revive the sick youth; and then she turned to assist me, blaming me for an excess of weakness, unbecoming a situation,

tion, in which we were required to make ourselves familiar with sorrow and with death.

Clofan at length revived, and his eyes opened upon me again. Heavenly powers! what a lock! No, I shall never forget it. It was expressive of the impulsive ardour of a soul that would gladly have quitted that body which it hardly animated, and flown into my bosom. It was some moments before he recovered the use of his voice. As soon as he was able to speak; make yourself easy, said he to sister Theresa, this crisis will, I know, prove salutary. These words revived my heart. But after this swoon, sister Theresa and the physician, thought that he ought not to be left in danger of such another, till he had first received spiritual aid; and this was accordingly announced to him.

He heard the advice calmly. This, said he, is an august ceremony; you, my sisters will join in it; your attentions are so sweet, so precious! We both promised to wait beside him, and his eyes thanked us, and gave me an indistinct idea of what was passing within him.

This duty of religion having been piously discharged, the sick person addressed the priest who had

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had drawn down upon him the attention of heaven. Sir, said he, this moment, the most precious in my life, must be distinguished by most sacred and solemn engagements. Deign to receive them. I swear in the presence of God whose majesty is round about me, that I desire to live only that I may sanctify before the altar the passion which consumes me. I swear to her who is the object of it, never to breathe but for her; and if she consents, to be united with her till death. My sister, added he, stretching out his hand to me, will you deign to receive in her name, that faith which I pledge to her, perhaps in the last moments of my life? My companion imagined that he was beginning to waver, and bade me give him my hand, and not thwart him; and every one about signified, that they looked upon this as the beginning of a fit of raving, and a proof that his fever was rising higher. Sir, said he to the priest, you have heard me. Whether I live or die, I have in the presence of heaven, and of these holy symbols, espoused Philippina Oray-de Valsan; and you who stand about us, are witnesses, that she accepts me for her husband.

I was not known among the Grey Sisters by the name of Valsan which had been first assumed by my father. But my true name Oray, as well as that of Philippina



Philippina, were known. Theresa was struck at the similitude, Oh heavens! whispered she to me, it is your name he pronounces! I was silent while we remained before witnesses: but when we were left alone; what would you have? said I; heaven has led me hither, to find, on the brink of the grave, a lover whom I imagined that I had lost. Should I willingly drive him to death and despair? Can I refuse to restore him to life? Do not, my sister, do not betray me. If he dies, I devote myself to the service of the poor, and will live for them. But, if we can serve him, let heaven's will be done, since we have been brought together by a miracle.

We saw him again, that same evening. I told him, that Theresa knew our secret, and respected the sacred nature of our engagements; and that I was going to inform the good vicar of Mareuil, and to beg him to gain my uncle's consent.

This was the true balsam which flowing through his veins, cured the wounds of his heart, allayed the burning violence of the fever, and restored him insensibly to health and life.

As he recovered, our confident witnessed the fortitude with which the good youth who thought me

as poor as himself, promised to surmount our misfortunes by his industry, and constancy, and asked my pardon a thousand and a thousand times for having no wealth to offer me.—Ah! his heart was a treasure more precious than all the wealth in the world.

Before his recovery was fully confirmed, the vicar of Mareuil, having received my letter, waited on my tutor at Paris, introduced himself, and having by the language of reason and benevolence, won his attention, said to him; fir, it is no vain opinion, that marriages are written in heaven before they are solemnized upon earth; and in this number is undoubtedly the marriage of your niece with the good young man whom you have so cruelly and ungenerously persecuted. In spite of you, and without their knowledge what is commonly called Destiny, but which I call Providence, has repeatedly brought them together. In short, they are engaged to one another by all that is most holy and inviolable. They now ask your consent.

Where is the foolish girl? enquired my uncle. Where is that ravisher? Inveigh not thus against them, said the good pastor; it is unjust; and although it were more reasonable; yet it comes now too late. Your ward is innocent; and nothing can  
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be purer than her heart. The young man is more than innocent; he is virtuous. Their love is already blameless in the sight of God; and if you please, shall become so in the eyes of men. Blame not what is sanctified by the tenderest piety.

I have told you, that my uncle was devout. Sir, said he to the vicar, I have fulfilled honestly my duties, as her guardian; and what I have done to save her cannot, I think, be blamed. I cannot see her in the same light in which you do; forgive my sincerity. You think a young woman innocent who, at the age of seventeen, elopes out of a convent in which she has been placed by her relations, and runs after a lover; yours are not severe morals. You approve of her pledging her faith, without her guardians consent; and this engagement you hold to be sacred! I bow before you; your character and heavy air awe me to silence, and command my respect.

Sir, replied the good priest, smiling, I will make a maxim of this indulgence. I am severe, where severity is proper. But, to all rules, even to the most inflexible, there must be some exceptions; and this one. Your niece has eloped from the convent, but that only to assume in a recess still

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more sacred, the habit and condition of a Grey Sister. By the beds of the sick has she passed two of the best years of her life; it was in a remote part of Dauphny where she was employed in the service of the poor, that she again found her lover, on the brink of the grave. The unhappy youth knew her, and supposing himself near his last moments, pledged his faith to her, in the presence of the living God. It was thus she received it, and this is what you and I must call religious and holy.

My tutor now changed his tone, and began to excuse himself. I wished, said he, I must confess to procure my niece an advantageous marriage. But, since she prefers a fanciful love to more solid advantages, and wants only my consent to make her happy, I give her my consent. This is all she asks, replied the vicar. Misfortune which the world views with such terror, does not affright her; they have both either courage to surmount, or patience to endure it; one of the Grey Sisters must have learned to suffer poverty. No, Sir, said my uncle with a sigh, she is not poor; and I am ready to restore her fortune. What call you, her fortune, returned the vicar. Has she any fortune? She has replied my uncle, in a tone of sorrow! She has an hundred thousand crowns in ready money, of



which two thirds was earned by the labour of her poor father. The rest is the fruit of my prudent management of what he left her, during these twelve years. My cares have been well laid out, truly! An hundred thousand crowns, said the vicar in astonishment! Alas! yes, said my uncle, still uneasy, an hundred thousand crowns, in gold! think Sir, how advantageously she might have married, if she had followed my advice; and what regret I feel in giving her to a young man who has nothing. But, it is her own doing, unhappy girl! Heaven be praised! Let her come, and receive this inheritance! It is hers. I have taken faithful care of it.

The vicar who gave us afterwards an account of this scene, could not help smiling at the remembrance of my uncle's distress, and the contrast between his sighs and the joy of our good protector. Be comforted, Sir, said he, in respect to your niece's fortune: she will make a good use of it. She will not forget her vow to be a sister to the poor, and a resource to the unfortunate. He next applied to my superiors to recall me to Paris, where matters of great concern required my presence. At the same time he wrote to our young convalescent, to come to him, as soon as he was fully recovered.

Clofan

Clofan came alone : I followed soon after ; and the year of my vows being expired, the vicar came and carried me to the house of my guardian. We found him in a better humour. His neighbour, the notary, had consoled him, by kind praises of his clerk. For this good office also were we indebted to the vicar of Mareuil : for when he deposited the billet which I mentioned in the hands of the notary, he had informed himself of the young man's conduct, character, and manners : and upon hearing nothing but what was favourable, had begged the notary to take what pains he could to remove my guardian's prejudices.

The same notary presented his young friend to my uncle, and in the presence of the good vicar and him, drew up our marriage contract. My uncle, sighing, assured me of the succession to his own fortune, and promised not to impair it. He kept his word, I must not forget to tell you, that Floretta was one of the witnesses of the contract.

The vicar had concealed from us both, the secret of our fortune. But, we both knew the secret of each other's hearts ; and this would have been enough to us. The other to be sure makes no unpleasant addition to it. Ah ! cried Clofan, when he heard

of the hundred thousand crowns, she will then have all that can be wished ! But, I shall be much more proud and happy than she ; for I shall owe all to her, and she nothing to me. I cannot allow, said I, of this mortifying distinction. We were poor when we married. This fortune falls upon us, like a shower from heaven, and we gather it in common ; we are therefore equally rich.

Thus was our union completed. Three children were the happy fruits of the marriage. They have already had an inheritance from their father ; and when death mingles my ashes with his, they will succeed also to what he has left me. What he left me, is this estate. When my husband bought it, he sent for the huntsman from the little wood. He settled him here ; and that worthy man, with his children about him, spent his days here, beside us, and in our society. He is still alive. You have seen him. It is he with the white hair ; his children are the tenants of my farms.

The abbess heard of my marriage, and blessed heaven for the event. Mademoiselle de Nuify was married, some time after me, and continued my intimate friend ; my sons espoused her daughters. The good vicar who had come to spend his latter days

days with me, blessed them, before his death. They have fulfilled his wishes and mine; for they live happily together. May they be as long happy as we have been. This is all I wish for them. But, may they beware of consoling their children! For love is much less dangerous when it comes in at the door, than when it enters by the window.

## F I N I S



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In the year 1761, Mess. Cramer, Forsskal, Van Haven, Baurefiend, and Niebuhr, by the orders, and at the expence of the King of Denmark, sailed from Copenhagen, upon that expedition. Each had a particular task assigned him, for which he seemed well qualified by the previous course of his life and studies. Michaelis, the celebrated Orientalist of Germany, the acute commentator upon Bishop Lowth's Prelections on Hebrew Poesy, had put into their hands a list of questions relative to the objects to which they were to direct their enquiries; and pointing out what facts it might be of importance for them to ascertain. They proceeded, in a Danish ship of war, by Marseilles, Malta, Constantinople, and Smyrna, to Alexandria in Egypt. After a residence of some time in Egypt, and various excursions through that country, they sailed down the Red Sea; by Djidda, to Loheia in Arabia. To explore Arabia was the chief design of their expedition. They therefore travelled carefully through it, were at pains to acquaint themselves familiarly with the language, and attended, indeed, to every object that could attract the notice of intelligent travellers, or concerning which it was likely that information might be expected from them, upon their return to Europe. Their researches were unfortunately interrupted by the death, first of one, and, soon after, of another of the party. The health of the rest was fast declining. To avoid the malignant effects of a climate and a mode of living which their constitutions were unfit to bear, they were obliged to avail themselves of the return of an English vessel, from Djidda to Bombay, and flee the fatal coast of Arabia. In the course of the voyage, another of these travellers died; and soon after their arrival at Bombay, a fourth; so that Mr Niebuhr only remained, to bring the papers of his companions, and the curiosities which they had collected, home to Europe. He was honourably received, and generously rewarded by the Court of Denmark.

Soon after his return, he published, under the auspices of the Danish Sovereign, two separate works, in which

which he laid before the world, the information which he and his companions had obtained in the course of their travels; his *Account of his Travels*, in four volumes 4to, and his *Description of Arabia*, in one. These works were a valuable addition to our knowledge of the state of society and manners in the East. They throw new light upon many obscurities in the sacred writings. They exhibit modifications of the human character, strikingly different from those which we are chiefly accustomed to contemplate. They represent Oriental literature in a pleasing and interesting aspect. They communicate a multiplicity of facts which ought to be known to every European, whom trade, curiosity, or political employment may lead to visit the countries of the East.

But, a page interspersed with Arabic characters, does not appear pleasing or beautiful to every European eye. Quarto's, however richly filled, are too ponderous volumes, to be taken up by every reader. Levity, flippancy, mad flights of fancy, and tales that stagger even simple credulity, are so generally relished and expected in books of travels, that, without such qualities, it is a matter of wonder, when the narrative of any traveller obtains general notice. These considerations have induced a learned person abroad, who saw that, although in the highest esteem among the learned, Mr Neibuhr's two works did not circulate so generally as they deserved, among ordinary readers, to make an abridgement of both, in two volumes 8vo: leaving out the least interesting, and least important parts of his information; but retaining the whole series of the adventures of Mr Neibuhr and his companions, and every detail of facts, in which amusement and instruction seemed to be happily united. This abridgement is the work now offered to the Public. The translator has carefully compared it with the books from which it is formed, and considers it as very ably executed. He is confident that it merits that favour from the enlightened British reader, which he flatters himself, it will not fail to obtain. He has done all that he could though he fears unsuccessfully, to translate it with ease, fidelity and spirit.



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